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THE WRITINGS OF
HENRY DAVID THOREAU

JOURNAL

EDITED BY BRADFORD TORREY

V

MARCH 5-NOVEMBER 30, 1853

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THE JOURNAL OF HENRY DAVID THOREAU

VOLUME V

I

MARCH, 1853 (ÆT. 35)

March 5. F. Brown showed me to-day some lesser redpolls which he shot yesterday. They turn out to be my falsely-called chestnut-frontleted bird of the winter. "*Linaria minor*, Ray. Lesser Redpoll Linnet. From Pennsylvania and New Jersey to Maine, in winter; inland to Kentucky. Breeds in Maine, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, Labrador, and the Fur Countries." — Audubon's Synopsis. They have a sharp bill, black legs and claws, and a bright-crimson crown or frontlet, in the male reaching to the base of the bill, with, in his case, a delicate rose or carmine on the breast and rump. Though this is described by Nuttall as an occasional visitor in the winter, it has been the prevailing bird here this winter.

Yesterday I got my grape cuttings. The day before went to the Corner Spring to look at the tufts of green grass. Got some of the very common leptogium (??). Is it one of the *Collemaceæ*? Was pleased with the sight of the yellow osiers of the golden willow, and the red

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of the cornel, now colors are so rare. Saw the green fine-threaded conferva in a ditch, commonly called frog-spittle. Brought it home in my pocket, and it expanded again in a tumbler. It appeared quite a fresh growth, with what looked like filmy air-bubbles, as big as large shot, in its midst.

The secretary of the Association for the Advancement of Science requests me, as he probably has thousands of others, by a printed circular letter from Washington the other day, to fill the blank against certain questions, among which the most important one was what branch of science I was specially interested in, using the term science in the most comprehensive sense possible. Now, though I could state to a select few that department of human inquiry which engages me, and should be rejoiced at an opportunity to do so, I felt that it would be to make myself the laughing-stock of the scientific community to describe or attempt to describe to them that branch of science which specially interests me, inasmuch as they do not believe in a science which deals with the higher law. So I was obliged to speak to their condition and describe to them that poor part of me which alone they can understand. The fact is I am a mystic, a transcendentalist, and a natural philosopher to boot. Now I think of it, I should have told them at once that I was a transcendentalist. That would have been the shortest way of telling them that they would not understand my explanations.

How absurd that, though I probably stand as near to nature as any of them, and am by constitution as

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good an observer as most, yet a true account of my relation to nature should excite their ridicule only! If it had been the secretary of an association of which Plato or Aristotle was the president, I should not have hesitated to describe my studies at once and particularly.

March 6. *Sunday.* Last Sunday I plucked some alder (apparently speckled) twigs, some (apparently *tremuloides*) aspen, and some swamp (?) willow, and put them in water in a warm room. Immediately the alder catkins were relaxed and began to lengthen and open, and by the second day to drop their pollen; like handsome pendants they hung round the pitcher, and at the same time the smaller female flower expanded and brightened. In about four days the aspens began to show their red anthers and feathery scales, being an inch in length and still extending. March 2d, I added the andromeda; March 3d, the rhodora. This morning, the ground being still covered with snow, there was quite a fog over the river and meadows, which I think owing to a warm atmosphere over the cold snow.

P. M. — To Lee's Hill.

I am pleased to cut the small woods with my knife to see their color. The high blueberry, hazel, and swamp-pink are green. I love to see the dear green sprouts of the sassafras and its large and fragrant buds and bark. The twigs or extremities of the branches of young trees twenty feet high look as if scorched and

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blackened. I gathered a pocketful of pignuts from a tree of Lee's Hill. Still sound, half of them. The water is pretty high on the meadows (though the ground is covered with snow), so that we get a little of the peculiar still lake view at evening when the wind goes down.

Two red squirrels made an ado about or above me near the North River, hastily running from tree to tree, leaping from the extremity of one bough to that of the nearest, or the next tree, until they gained and ascended a large white pine. I approached and stood under this, while they made a great fuss about me. One at length came part way down to reconnoitre me. It seemed that one did the barking — a faint, short, chippy bark, like that of a *toy* dog, — its tail vibrating each time, while its neck was stretched over a bough as it peered at me. The other, higher up, kept up a sort of gurgling whistle, more like a bird than a beast. When I made a noise they would stop a moment.

Scared up a partridge, which had crawled into a pile of wood. Saw a gray hare, a dirty yellowish gray, not trig and neat, but, as usual, apparently in a deshabille. As it frequently does, it ran a little way and stopped just at the entrance to its retreat; then, when I moved again, suddenly disappeared. By a slight obscure hole in the snow, it had access to a large and apparently deep woodchuck's (?) hole.

Stedman Buttrick calls the ducks which we see in the winter, widgeons and wood sheldrakes.

The hemlock cones have shed their seeds, but there

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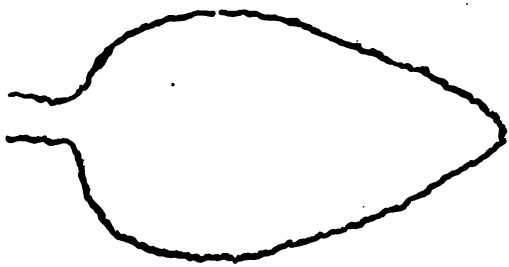
are some closed yet on the ground. Part of the pitch pine cones are yet closed. This is the form of one: —



March 7. The lichen on the earth and stones amid mosses which I have thought a collema, is, I now think, a peltigera, perhaps *P. canina* (mad-dog peltigera of Hooker?). The catkins of the sweet-gale have now, after nine days, opened, and drop their sulphury pollen more perfectly than the alders and poplars, methinks, which soon dried up and the last turned black, *i. e.* the anthers. I doubt if the willow catkins gathered at the same time (February 27) will blossom, though they have expanded.

P. M. — To Walden, Goose, and Flint's Ponds, and chestnut wood by Turnpike.

The silk of the most forward willows does not generally project the length of the scale beyond the scale yet, and I am in doubt whether they give any indication of spring; but I saw one whose catkins projected more than the length of the scale, and revealed a tinge of red through their silk, which I think have felt the influence of the new year. Also the dark chocolate-colored alder catkins — what I have called *A. incana* — are not only

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relaxed, but there is an obvious looseness and space between the scales. I doubt if I have detected the speckled alder in flower. I see, however, some with short thick reddish catkins and a dull opaque bark, others with a fresh glossy and speckled bark and long, rather more forward (?), dark-chocolate catkins. These may be only a more recent and vigorous growth of the other. There is one of these a few rods east of the Peak clearing, on the shore of Walden.

On the side of the Peak, I see now small radical (?) or lower leaves of a goldenrod, as fresh as anything, the dark mulberry, claret, or lake colored radical leaves of the hawkweed,[1] and the greenish radical leaves of the bushy gerardia.

What is the earliest sign of spring? The motion of worms and insects? The flow of sap in trees and the swelling of buds? Do not the insects awake with the flow of the sap? Bluebirds, etc., probably do not come till insects come out. Or are there earlier signs in the water? — the tortoises, frogs, etc.

The little cup and cocciferæ lichens, mixed with other cladonias of the reindeer moss kind, are full of fresh fruit to-day. The scarlet apothecia of the coeciferæ on the stumps and earth partly covered with snow, with which they contrast, I never saw more fresh and brilliant, but they shrivel up and lose their brightness by the time you get them home. The only birds I *see* to-day are the lesser redpolls. I have not seen a fox-colored sparrow or a *Fringilla hyemalis*. In the Flint's Pond Mill Brook ditch, I see where the green conferva is left

[1] ?? Was it not *Aster undulatus*?

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suspended vertically to the twigs, the water having gone down, and, being blanched, looks like very dense cobwebs. There are still a few pretty bright sumach berries left.

Gathered a few chestnuts. A good many, if not most, are now turned black and soured or spoiled and softened by the wet. Where they are less exposed to moisture, close to the base of the [*sic*], or on stumps where the ground is more elevated, or where they are protected under a very thick heap of light-lying leaves, they are perfectly sound and sweet and fresh yet, neither shrivelled nor soured (?). This peculiar condition is probably requisite to preserve their life for sprouting. I planted some in Sophia's pot. No doubt the mice and squirrels put many in secure, sufficiently dry and sufficiently moist places for this purpose, and so do a service. I find whitish grubs stretching themselves under the moist chestnut leaves, but they were in the same state in January.

Found the yellow bud of a *Nuphar advena* in the ditch on the Turnpike on E. Hosmer's land, bud nearly half an inch in diameter on a very thick stem, three fourths of an inch thick at base and ten inches long, four or five inches above the mud. This may have swollen somewhat during the warmest weather in the winter, after pushing up in the fall. And I see that it may, in such a case, in favorable locations, blossom at very early but irregular periods in the spring. What are the weeds in the water, — these which, together with the common cress, have been perfectly green and fresh all winter, one in regular beds of small roundish leaves

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very like the cress,[1] the other with a long, narrow, coarse leaf?[2]

I read an account the other day of a snipe, I think it was, which, though neither plucked nor drawn, underwent no change but that of drying up, becoming a natural mummy for some unknown reason, as has happened to other, larger bodies. Methinks that many, if not most, men are a sort of natural mummies. The life having departed out of them, decay and putrefaction, disorganization, has not taken place, but they still keep up a dry and withered semblance of life. What the salt is that saves them and robs the worms I do not know. Some bodies there are that, being dead and buried, do not decay, but after the lapse of years are found as fresh as if they had died but yesterday. So some men, though all true life was long ago extinct in them, wear this deceitful semblance of life. They seem to *live* on, without salt or season, from mere toughness or dryness or some antiseptic quality in their fibre. They do not mellowly dissolve and fatten the earth with their decay.

March 8. 10 A. M. — Rode to Saxonville with F. Brown to look at a small place for sale, *via* Wayland. Return by Sudbury.

On wheels in snow. A spring sheen on the snow. The melting snow, running and sparkling down-hill in the ruts, was quite springlike. The snow pure white, but full of water and dissolving through the heat of the sun. Saw a mink run across the road in Sudbury, a large

[1] *Chrysosplenium?* [2] Probably forget-me-not.

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black weasel, to appearance, worming its supple way over the snow. Where it ran, its tracks were thus: = = = = the intervals between the fore and hind feet sixteen or eighteen inches by two and a half.

The distant view of the open flooded Sudbury meadows, all dark blue, surrounded by a landscape of white snow, gave an impulse to the dormant sap in my veins. Dark-blue and angry waves, contrasting with the white but melting winter landscape. Ponds, of course, do not yet afford this water prospect; only the flooded meadows. There is no ice over or near the stream, and the flood has covered or broken up much of the ice on the meadows. The aspect of these waters at sunset, when the air is still, begins to be unspeakably soothing and promising. Waters are at length, and begin to reflect, and, instead of looking into the sky, I look into the placid reflecting water for the signs and promise of the morrow. These meadows are the most of ocean that I have fairly learned. Now, when the sap of the trees is probably beginning to flow, the sap of the earth, the river, overflows and bursts its icy fetters. This is the sap of which I make my sugar after the frosty nights, boiling it down and crystallizing it. I must be on the lookout now for the gulls and the ducks. That dark-blue meadowy revelation. It is as when the sap of the maple bursts forth early and runs down the trunk to the snow.

Saw two or three hawks sailing. Saw the remains of four cows and a horse that were burned in a barn a month ago. Where the paunch was, a large bag of coarse hay and stalks was seen in the midst of an indistinct circumference of ribs. Saw some very large willow

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buds expanded (their silk) to thrice the length of their scales, indistinctly carved or waved with darker lines around them. They look more like, are more of, spring than anything I have seen. Heard the *phebe*, or spring note of the chickadee, now, before any spring bird has arrived.

I know of no more pleasing employment than to ride about the country with a companion very early in the spring, looking at farms with a view to purchasing if not paying for them.

Heard the first flies buzz in the sun on the south side of the house.

March 9. *Wednesday.* Rain, dissolving the snow and raising the river. I do not perceive that the early elm or the white maple buds have swollen yet. So the relaxed and loosened (?) alder catkins and the extended willow catkins and poplar catkins are the first signs of reviving vegetation which I have witnessed. Minott thinks, and quotes some old worthy as authority for saying, that the bark of the striped squirrel is the, or a, first sure sign of decided spring weather.

March 10. This is the first really spring day. The sun is brightly reflected from all surfaces, and the north side of the street begins to be a little more passable to foot-travellers. You do not think it necessary to button up your coat.

P. M. — To Second Division Brook.

As I stand looking over the swollen river, looking from the bridge into the flowing, eddying tide, — the

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almost strange chocolate-colored water, — the sound of distant crows and cocks is full of spring. As Anacreon says "the works of men shine," so the sounds of men and birds are musical. Something analogous to the thawing of the ice seems to have taken place in the air. At the end of winter there is a season in which we are daily expecting spring, and finally a day when it arrives.

I see many middling-sized black spiders on the edge of the snow, very active. By John Hosmer's ditch by the riverside I see the skunk-cabbage springing freshly, the points of the spathes just peeping out of the ground, in some other places three inches high even. The radical leaves of innumerable plants (as here a dock in and near the water) are evidently affected by the spring influences. Many plants are to some extent evergreen, like the buttercup now beginning to start. Methinks the first obvious evidence of spring is the pushing out of the swamp willow catkins, then the relaxing of the earlier alder catkins, then the pushing up of skunk-cabbage spathes (and pads at the bottom of water). This is the order I am inclined to, though perhaps any of these may take precedence of all the rest in any particular case.[1]

What is that dark pickle-green alga (?) at the bottom of this ditch, looking *somewhat* like a decaying cress, with fruit like a lichen?

At Nut Meadow Brook crossing we rest awhile on the rail, gazing into the eddying stream. The ripple-marks on the sandy bottom, where silver spangles shine in the river with black wrecks of caddis-cases lodged under each shelving sand, the shadows of the invisible dimples

[1] *Vide* next page.

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reflecting prismatic colors on the bottom, the minnows already stemming the current with restless, wiggling tails, ever and anon darting aside, probably to secure some invisible mote in the water, whose shadows we do not at first detect on the sandy bottom, — when detected so much more obvious as well as larger and more interesting than the substance, — in which each fin is distinctly seen, though scarcely to be detected in the substance; these are all very beautiful and exhilarating sights, a sort of diet drink to heal our winter discontent. Have the minnows played thus all winter? The equisetum at the bottom has freshly grown several inches. Then should I not have given the precedence on the last page to this and some other water-plants? I suspect that I should, and the flags appear to be starting.

I am surprised to find on the rail a young tortoise, an inch and one sixteenth long in the shell, which has crawled out to sun, or perchance is on its way to the water, which I think must be the *Emys guttata*, for there is a large and distinct yellow spot on each dorsal and lateral plate, and the third dorsal plate is hexagonal and not quadrangular, as the *E. picta* is described to be, though in my specimen I can't make it out to be so. Yet the edges of the plates are prominent, as is described in the *E. insculpta*, which, but for the spots and two yellow spots on each side of the hind head and one fainter on the top of the head, I should take it to be. It is about seven eighths of an inch wide. Very inactive. When was it hatched and where?

What is the theory of these sudden pitches, or steep shelving places, in the sandy bottom of the brook? It is

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very interesting to walk along such a brook as this in the midst of the meadow, which you can better do now before the frost is quite out of the sod, and gaze into the deep holes in its irregular bottom and the dark gulfs under the banks. Where it rushes rapidly over the edge of a steep slope in the bottom, the shadow of the disturbed surface is like sand hurried forward in the water. The bottom, being of shifting sand, is exceedingly irregular and interesting.

What was that sound that came on the softened air? It was the warble of the first bluebird from that scraggy apple orchard yonder. When this is heard, then has spring arrived.

It must be that the willow twigs, both the yellow and green, are brighter-colored than before. I cannot be deceived. They shine as if the sap were already flowing under the bark; a certain lively and glossy hue they have. The early poplars are pushing forward their catkins, though they make not so much display as the willows.

Still in some parts of the woods it is good sledding. At Second Division Brook, the fragrance of the senecio, which is decidedly evergreen, which I have bruised, is very permanent and brings round the year again. It is a memorable sweet meadowy fragrance. I find a yellow-spotted tortoise (*Emys guttata*) in the brook. A very few leaves of cowslips, and those wholly under water, show themselves yet. The leaves of the water saxifrage, for the most part frost-bitten, are common enough. Near the caltha was also green frog-*spawn*, and Channing

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says he saw pollywogs.[1] Perhaps it is a particularly warm place. The alder's catkins — the earliest of them — are very plainly expanding, or, rather, the scales are loose and separated, and the whole catkin relaxed.

Minott says that old Sam Nutting, the hunter, — Fox Nutting, Old Fox, he was called, — who died more than forty years ago (he lived in Jacob Baker's house, Lincoln; came from Weston) and was some seventy years old then, told him that he had killed not only bear about Fair Haven among the walnuts, but *moose!*

March 12. Last night it snowed, a sleety snow again, and now the ground is whitened with it, and where are gone the bluebirds whose warble was wafted to me so lately like a blue wavelet through the air?

The greater part of the alder catkins (as well as the willow) are still in their winter condition, but some have their scales conspicuously loosened and elevated, showing their lighter-colored edges and interstices. They are actually beginning to blossom, certainly in advance of the willows. The sweet-gale is the prettiest flower which I have [found] expanded yet.

It is essential that a man confine himself to pursuits — a scholar, for instance, to studies — which lie next to and conduce to his life, which do not go against the grain, either of his will or his imagination. The scholar finds in his experience some studies to be most fertile and radiant with light, others dry, barren, and dark. If he is wise, he will not persevere in the last, as a plant in a cellar will strive toward the light. He will confine

[1] Possibly lizards [*i. e.* newts, or salamanders].

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the observations of his mind as closely as possible to the experience or life of his senses. His thought must live with and be inspired with the life of the body. The death-bed scenes and observations even of the best and wisest afford but a sorry picture of our humanity. Some men endeavor to live a constrained life, to subject their whole lives to their wills, as he who said he would give a sign if he were conscious after his head was cut off, — but he gave no sign. Dwell as near as possible to the channel in which your life flows. A man may associate with such companions, he may pursue such employments, as will darken the day for him. Men choose darkness rather than light.

P. M. — To Cliffs and Fair Haven.

The sleety snow has whitened the north sides of the oaks, giving a wintry aspect as well to the wood as to the ground.

Saw the first lark rise from the railroad causeway and sail on quivering wing over the meadow to alight on a heap of dirt. Was that a mink we saw at the Boiling Spring? The senecio was very forward there in the water, and it still scents my fingers; a very lasting odor it leaves. These melting snows, so saturated with water, their white contrasting so strongly with the dark spaces, wet the feet most of any. The farmer says that no composition will keep out snow-water. The snow rests on your feet to melt. There has been no regular breaking up of the river, it has been so transiently closed the past winter. Fair Haven Pond is nearly half open. But I see no gulls nor ducks. The young oaks on the plain under the Cliffs appear still full of leaves. It is a rare lichen day.

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The usnea with its large fruit is very rich on the maples in the swamp, luxuriating in this moist, overcast, melting day, but it is impossible to get it home in good condition. Looking behind the bark of a dead white pine, I find plenty of small gnats quite lively and ready to issue forth as soon as the sun comes out. The grubs there are sluggish, buried in the *chankings*. I took off some pieces of bark more than three feet long and one foot wide. Between this and the wood, in the dust left by borers, the gnats were concealed, ready to swarm. This their hibernaculum. The rich red-brown leaves of the gnaphalium, downy white beneath in circles, begin to attract me where the snow is off.

If I were to make a study of the tracks of animals and represent them by plates, I should conclude with the track of man. Everywhere I see the track of the dog and within it that of the game he is pursuing.

March 13. 6 A. M. — To Cliffs.

There begins to be a greater depth of saffron in the morning sky. The morning and evening horizon fires are warmer to the eye. I go to the Cliffs to hear if any new spring birds have arrived, for not only they are more sure to sing in the morning, but it is stiller and you can hear them better then. I hear only crows and blue jays and chickadees lisping. Excepting a few bluebirds and larks, no spring birds have come, apparently. The woods are still. But what was that familiar spring sound from the pine wood across the river, a sharp *vetter vetter vetter vetter*, like some woodpecker, or possibly nuthatch? Yet I thought it the voice of the bird and

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not a tapping. It reminds me of the pine warbler (?), if that is it. I see the nuphar pushing up faintly, and I see some of my little gnats of yesterday in the morning sun, somewhat mosquito-like.

P. M. — No sap flows yet from my hole in the white maple by the bridge. Found on the Great Fields a fragment of Indian soapstone ware, which, judging from its curve and thinness, for a vestige of the rim remains, was a dish of the form and size of a saucer, only three times as thick. Listening for early birds, I hear a faint tinkling sound in the leafless woods, as if a piece of glass rattled against a stone.

All enterprises must be self-supporting, must pay for themselves. The great art of life is how to turn the surplus life of the soul into life for the body, — that so the life be not a failure. For instance, a poet must sustain his body with his poetry. As is said of the merchants, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the life of men is a failure, and bankruptcy may be surely prophesied. You must get your living by loving. To be supported by the charity of friends or a government pension is to go into the almshouse. To inherit property is not to be born, — is to be still-born rather. And the other, as I said, provided you continue to breathe, is to go into the almshouse. On Sundays the poor debtor goes to church to take an account of stock, and finds his outgoes greater than his income. In the Catholic Church especially they go into chancery.[1] As is the sun to the vegetable, so is virtue to the bodily health.

[1] [*Cape Cod, and Miscellanies*, p. 461; *Misc.*, Riv. 261.]

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March 14. P. M. — Repairing my boat.

High winds, growing colder and colder, ground stiffening again. My ears have not been colder the past winter. Lowell Fay tells me that he overtook with a boat and killed last July a woodchuck which was crossing the river at Hollowell Place. He also says that the blacksmith of Sudbury has two otter skins taken in that town. March is rightly famous for its winds.

March 15. There were few colder nights last winter than the last. The water in the flower-stand containing my pet tortoise froze solid, — completely enveloping him, though I had a fire in my chamber all the evening, — also that in my pail pretty thick. But the tortoise, having been thawed out on the stove, leaving the impression of his back shell in the ice, was even more lively than ever. His efforts at first had been to get under his chip, as if to go into the mud. To-day the weather is severely and remarkably cold. It is not easy to keep warm in my chamber. I have not taken a more blustering walk the past winter than this afternoon.

C. says he has heard a striped squirrel and seen a water-bug (*Gyrinus*), — it must have been on Saturday (12th). Ice froze just hard enough to bear last night, — about an inch thick. In the woods beyond Peter's we heard our dog, a large Newfoundland dog, barking at something, and, going forward, were amused to see him barking while he retreated with fear at that black oak with remarkable excrescence, which had been cut off just above it, leaving it like some misshapen idol about the height of a man. Though we set him on to it, he did not

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venture within three or four rods. I would not have believed that he would notice any such strange thing.

Organization, — how it prevails! After a little discipline, we study with love and reverence the forms of disease as healthy organisms. The fungi have a department in the science of botany. Who can doubt but that they too are fungi lower in the scale which he sees on the wick of his lamp!

Notwithstanding this day is so cold that I keep my ears covered, the sidewalks melt in the sun, such is its altitude. The coldness of the air blown from the icy northwest prevails over the heat of the sun.

The Bermudas are said to have been first discovered by a Spanish ship of that name, which was wrecked on them, — "which till then for six thousand years had been nameless," says John Smith. "No place known hath better walls nor a broader ditch." The English did not stumble upon them in their first voyages to Virginia, and the first Englishman who was ever in them was wrecked on them in 1593; yet at the very first planting of them in 1612 with some sixty persons, the first Governor the same year "built and laid the foundations of eight or nine forts" (!!), to be ready, one would say, to entertain the first ship company that should be next shipwrecked on to them. It would have been more sensible to have built as many charity houses. These are the vex'd Bermoothes.

March 17. Channing says he saw blackbirds yesterday; F. C. Brown, that they were getting ice out of Loring's Pond yesterday.

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P. M. — Rode to Lexington with Brown.

Saw, on the corner of a wall by a house about three quarters of a mile from the monument on the Bedford road, a stone apparently worn by water into the form of a rude bird-like idol, which I thought, as I rode by, to be the work of the Indians. It was probably discovered and used by them. It was as near as nature might come by accident to an eagle, with a very regular pedestal such as busts have, on which it stood, — in all about two and a half feet high. Whitewashed as well as the wall. Found not near water. It is one of those stones which Schoolcraft describes as found among the Chippeways.

The ways are mostly settled, frozen dry.

March 18. The season is so far advanced that the sun, every now and then promising to shine out through this rather warm rain, lighting up transiently with a whiter light the dark day and my dark chamber, affects me as I have not been affected for a long time. I must go forth.

P. M. — To Conantum.

I find it unexpectedly mild. It appears to be clearing up but will be wet underfoot.

Now, then, spring is beginning again in earnest after this short check. Is it not always thus? Is there not always an early promise of spring, something answering to the Indian summer, which succeeds the summer, so an Indian or false spring preceding the true spring, — first false promise which merely excites our expectations to disappoint them, followed by a short return of

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winter? Yet all things appear to have made progress, even during these wintry days, for I cannot believe that they have thus instantaneously taken a start. I no sooner step out of the house than I hear the bluebirds in the air, and far and near, everywhere except in the woods, throughout the town you may hear them, — the blue curls of their warblings, — harbingers of serene and warm weather, little azure rills of melody trickling here and there from out the air, their short warble trilled in the air reminding of so many corkscrews assaulting and thawing the torpid mass of winter, assisting the ice and snow to melt and the streams to flow. Everywhere also, all over the town, within an hour or two have come out little black two-winged gnats with plumed or fuzzy shoulders. When I catch one in my hands, it looks like [a] bit of black silk ravelling. They have suddenly come forth everywhere.

How eagerly the birds of passage penetrate the northern ice, watching for a crack by which to enter! Forthwith the swift ducks will be seen winging their way along the rivers and up the coast. They watch the weather more sedulously than the teamster. All nature is thus forward to move with the revolution of the seasons. Now for some days the birds have been ready by myriads, a flight or two south, to invade our latitudes and, with this mild and serener weather, resume their flight.

Bells and the lowing of cows have acquired I know not what new melody in this air, for a change has come over all things, as well as our spirits. They sound more limpid, as, in this sun just bursting forth, the drops of

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water on the sprays are prismatic. The geiropodium has bleached all white.

I stand still now to listen if I may hear the note of any new bird, for the sound of my steps hinders, and there are so few sounds at this season in a still afternoon like this that you are pretty sure to detect one within a considerable distance. Hark! Did I not hear the note of some bird then? Methinks it could not have been my own breathing through my nose. No, there it is again, — a robin; and we have put the winter so much further behind us. What mate does he call to in these deserted fields? It is, as it were, a scared note as he whisks by, followed by the familiar but still anxious *toot, toot, toot.* He does not sing as yet. There were one or two more fine bird-like tinkling sounds I could not trace home, not to be referred to my breathing.

It is decidedly clearing up. At Conantum Cliff the columbines have started and the saxifrage even, the former as conspicuously as any plant, particularly any on dry ground. Both these grow there in high and dry chinks in the face of the cliff, where no soil appears, and the sunnier the exposure the more advanced. Even if a fallen fragment of the rock is so placed as to reflect the heat upon it, it has the start of its neighbors. These plants waste not a day, not a moment, suitable to their development. I pluck dry sprigs of pennyroyal, which I love to put in my pocket, for it scents me thoroughly and reminds me of garrets full of herbs.

With regard to my seringo-bird (and others), I think that my good genius withheld his name that I might learn his character.

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I came forth expecting to hear new birds, and I am not disappointed. We know well what to count upon. Their coming is more sure than the arrival of the sailing and steaming packets. Almost while I listen for this purpose, I hear the *chuck*, *chuck* of a blackbird in the sky, whom I cannot detect. So small an object is lost in the wide expanse of the heavens, though no obstacle intervenes. When your eye has detected it, you can follow it well enough, but it is difficult to bring your sight to bear on it, as to direct a telescope to a particular star. How many hawks may fly undetected, yet within sight, above our heads! And there 's the great gull I came to see, already fishing in front of Bittern Cliff. Now he stoops to the water for his prey, but sluggishly, methinks. He requires a high and perhaps a head wind to make his motions graceful. I see no mate. He must have come up, methinks, before the storm was over, unless he started when I did. I believe it is only an easterly wind or storm brings him up.

The ice in Fair Haven is more than half melted, and now the woods beyond the pond, reflected in its serene water where there has been opaque ice so long, affect me as they perhaps will not again this year.[1] The oaks have not yet lost their leaves. The thistles, which keep their heads so low they do not feel the wind, show their green faces everywhere. It grows more and more fair. Yesterday at this hour it was more raw and blustering than the past winter; to-day it seems more mild and balmy than summer. I have rarely known a greater contrast. There is a little cap of dark and angry cloud

[1] The tapping of the woodpecker about this time.

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on Wachusett, not so wide as the mountain's base, while all the rest of the horizon there is clear.

Several times I hear and see blackbirds flying north singly, high overhead, chucking as if to find their mates, migrating; or are they even now getting near their own breeding-place? Perchance these are blackbirds that were hatched here, — that know me! I saw a silent sparrow lurking amid the hazels and other shrubs by a wall and picking worms or what-not, — brownish gray with a forked tail, two triangular black spots on the breast, and black stripes lengthwise there, altogether a gray, much striped bird, two brownish stripes with a lighter-colored one on the centre of the head. Soon after, I heard a song sparrow distinctly. Could it have been this? [1] I think not.

The bluebird and song sparrow sing immediately on their arrival, and hence deserve to enjoy some pre-eminence. They give expression to the joy which the season inspires. But the robin and blackbird only peep and chuck at first, commonly, and the lark is silent and flitting. The bluebird at once fills the air with his sweet warbling, and the song sparrow from the top of a rail pours forth his most joyous strain. Both express their delight at the weather which permits them to return to their favorite haunts. They are the more welcome to man for it.

Hearing a faint quack, I looked up and saw two apparently dusky ducks winging their swift way northward over the course of the river. Channing says he saw

[1] Think now (March 24) it must have been the song sparrow. *Vide* Apr. 1st.

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some large white-breasted ducks to-day, and also a frog. I have seen dead frogs, as if killed while dormant.

The sun is now declining, with a warm and bright light on all things, a light which answers to the late afterglow of the year, when, in the fall, wrapping his cloak closer about him, the traveller goes home at night to prepare for winter. This the foreglow of the year, when the walker goes home at eve to dream of summer.

To-day first I smelled the earth.

March 19. This morning I hear the blackbird's fine clear whistle and also his sprayey note, as he is swayed back and forth on the twigs of the elm or of the black willow over the [river]. His first note may be a chuck, but his second is a rich gurgle or warble.

"Coelum non animum mutant, qui trans mare currunt."
(Marginal index in Benzo's "History of the West Indies.")

Observed the leaves of a dock in the water, more forward than any vegetation I have noticed.

March 20. *Sunday.* 8 A. M. — *Via* Walden, Goose, Flint's, and Beaver Ponds and the valley of Stony Brook to the south end of Lincoln.

A rather cool and breezy morning, which was followed by milder day. We go listening for early birds, with bread and cheese for our dinners.

(Yesterday I forgot to say I painted my boat. Spanish brown and raw oil were the ingredients. I found the painter had sold me the brown in hard lumps as big as peas, which I could not reduce with a stick; so I passed the whole when mixed through an old coffee-mill, which

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made a very good paint-mill, catching it in an old coffee-pot, whose holes I puttied up, there being a lack of vessels; and then I broke up the coffee-mill and nailed a part over the bows to protect them, the boat is made so flat. I had first filled the seams with some grafting-wax I had, melted.)

It was a question whether we should not go to Fair Haven to see the gulls, etc. I notice the downy, swaddled plants now and in the fall, the fragrant life-everlasting and the ribwort, innocents born in a cloud. Those algæ I saw the other day in John Hosmer's ditch were the most like seaweed of anything I have seen in the county. They made me look at the whole earth as a seashore; reminded me of Nereids, sea nymphs, Triton, Proteus, etc., etc.; made the ditches fabulate in an older than the arrow-headed character. Better learn this strange character which nature speaks to-day than the Sanscrit. Books in the brooks. Saw a large dead water-bug on Walden. I suspect he came out alive.

Walden is melting apace. It has a canal two rods wide along the northerly side and the west end, wider at the east end, yet, after running round from west to east, it does not keep the south shore, but crosses in front of the deep cove in a broad crack to where it started, by the ice ground. It is glorious to behold the life and joy of this ribbon of water sparkling in the sun. The wind blows eastward over the opaque ice, unusually hard, owing to the recent severe though transient cold, all watered or waved like a tessellated floor, a figured carpet; yet dead, yet in vain, till it slides on to the living water surface, where it raises a myriad brilliant sparkles

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on the bare face of the pond, an expression of glee, of youth, of spring, as if it spoke the joy of the fishes within it and of the sands on its shore, a silvery sheen like the scales of a leuciscus, as if it were all one active fish in the spring. It is the contrast between life and death. There is the difference between winter and spring. The bared face of the pond sparkles with joy. How handsome the curves which the edge of the ice makes, answering somewhat to those of the shore, but more regular, sweeping entirely round the pond, as if defined by a vast, bold sweep![1]

It is evident that the English do not enjoy that contrast between winter and summer that we do, — that there is too much greenness and spring in the winter. There is no such wonderful resurrection of the year. Birds kindred with our first spring ones remain with them all winter, and flowers answering to our earliest spring ones put forth there in January. In one sense they have no winter but such as our spring. Our April is their March; our March, their February; our February, January, and December are not theirs at all under any name or sign.

Those alder catkins on the west side of Walden tremble and undulate in the wind, they are so relaxed and ready to bloom, — the most forward blossom-buds. Here and there, around the pond, within a rod of the water, is the fisherman's stone fireplace, with its charred brands, where he cheered and warmed himself and ate his lunch.

The peculiarity of to-day is that now first you perceive that dry, warm, summer-presaging scent from dry

[1] [*Walden*, pp. 343, 344; Riv. 480.]

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oak and other leaves, on the sides of hills and ledges. You smell the summer from afar. The warm [*sic*] makes a man young again. There is also some dryness, almost dustiness, in the roads. The mountains are white with snow, and sure as the wind is northwest it is wintry; but now it is more westerly. The edges of the mountains now melt into the sky. It is affecting to be put into communication with such distant objects by the power of vision, — actually to look into rich lands of promise. In this spring breeze, how full of life the silvery pines, probably the under sides of their leaves. Goose Pond is wholly open. Unexpectedly dry and crispy the grass is getting in warm places.

At Flint's Pond, gathered a handful or two of chestnuts on a sloping bank under the leaves, *every one* sound and sweet, but mostly sprouting. There were none black as at C. Smith's, proving that in such places as this, somewhat warm and dry, they are all preserved the winter through. Now, then, new groves of chestnuts (and of oaks?) are being born. Under these wet leaves I find myriads of the snow-fleas, like powder. Some brooks are full of little wiggling creatures *somewhat* like caddis-worms, stemming the stream, — food for the early fishes. The canoe birch sprouts are red or salmon-colored like those of the common, but soon they cast off their salmon-colored jackets and come forth with a white but naked look, all dangling with ragged reddish curls. What is that little bird that makes so much use of these curls in its nest, lined with coarse grass? The snow still covers the ground on the north side of hills, which are hard and slippery with frost.

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I am surprised to find Flint's Pond not more than half broken up. Probably it was detained by the late short but severe cold, while Walden, being deeper, was not. Standing on the icy side, the pond appears nearly all frozen; the breadth of open water is far removed and diminished to a streak; I say it is beginning to break up. Standing on the water side (which in Flint's is the middle portion), it appears to be but bordered with ice, and I say there is ice still left in the pond.

Saw a bluish-winged beetle or two.[1] In a stubble-field east of Mt. Tabor, started up a pack (though for numbers, about twenty, it may have been a bevy) of quail, which went off to some young pitch pines, with a whir like a shot, the plump, round birds. The redpolls are still numerous.[2] On the warm, dry cliff, looking south over Beaver Pond, I was surprised to see a large butterfly, black with buff-edged wings, so tender a creature to be out so early, and, when alighted, opening and shutting its wings. What does it do these frosty nights? Its chrysalis must have hung in some sunny nook of the rocks. Born to be food for some early bird.[3]

Cutting a maple for a bridge over Lily Brook, I was rejoiced to see the sap falling in large, clear drops from the wound.

March 21. Morning along the river.

The air full of song sparrows, — *swedit swedit swedit* and then a rapid jingle or trill, holding up its head with-

[1] *Vide* forward [p. 33].

[2] Have not seen them again, March 28.

[3] [This butterfly, the mourning-cloak (Antiopa), hibernates in the perfect state.]

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out fear of me, the innocent, humble bird, or one pursuing another through the alders by the waterside. Why are the early birds found most along the water? These song sparrows are now first heard *commonly*. The blackbirds, too, create some melody. And the bluebirds, how sweet their warble in the soft air, heard over the water! The robin is heard further off, and seen flying rapidly, hurriedly through the orchard. And now the elms suddenly ring with the *chill-lill-lill* and canary-like notes of the *Fringilla hyemalis*, which fill the air more than those of any bird yet, — a little strange they sound because they do not tarry to breed with us, — a ringing sound. The Cheney elm buds appear to be beginning to open, and a few green blades of grass are shooting up on our bank.

I think that with my knife I can cut a pole that will bridge almost anything that can be called a *brook* even in New England.

Observed yesterday where a mass of ice in Walden of about an acre had cracked off from the main body and blown thirty or forty rods, crumbling up its edge against the eastern shore.[1]

Might not my Journal be called "Field Notes?"

I see a honey-bee about my boat, apparently attracted by the beeswax (if there is any) in the grafting-wax with which I have luted it. There are many; one is caught and killed in it.

P. M. — To Kibbe Place.

The *Stellaria media* is fairly in bloom in Mr. Cheney's

[1] [*Walden*, p. 343; Riv. 480.]

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garden. This, then, is our earliest flower; though it is said to have been introduced. It may blossom under favorable circumstances in warmer weather any time in the winter. It has been so much opened that you could easily count its petals any month the past winter, and plainly blossoms with the first pleasant weather that brings the robins, etc., in numbers. I heard undoubtedly a frog jump into the river, though I did not see him. Conspicuous, now that the snow is almost entirely gone, are the fresh-looking evergreen leaves of the pyrola. What shall I name those run-out pastures, those arid downs, where the reindeer lichen fairly covers the whole surface, and your feet cronch it at every step? I see the *Fringilla hyemalis* on the old Carlisle road. How suddenly the newly arrived birds are dispersed over the whole town! How numerous they must be! Robins are now quite abundant, flying in flocks. One after another flits away before you from the trees, somewhat like grasshoppers in the grass, uttering their notes faintly, — ventriloquizing, in fact. I hear [one] meditating a bar to be sung anon, which sounds a quarter of a mile off, though he is within two rods. However, they do not yet get to melody. I thank the red-wing for a little bustle and commotion which he makes, trying to people the fields again. To-day, as well as yesterday, there is a slight warm haze before the day is over. A hawk looking about. Are they not more active now? Do they not, in fact, migrate? What is that lustrous green pestle-shaped beetle (common enough) with a waved buff spot on each wing-case? When he flew, I thought he showed blue beneath and was the same I saw yesterday in Lincoln, — the first beetle-

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insect I have seen. Insects and flies, both in air and water, come out in the spring sun. Just as flies buzz on the dry and sunny side of a bank or rock, those little wiggling insects come forth in the open and sunny water, and are no less active, though they do not hum. Saw two more of those large black and buff butterflies. The same degree of heat brings them out everywhere.

The bees this morning had access to no flower; so they came to my grafting-wax, notwithstanding it was mixed with tallow and covered with fresh paint. Often they essayed to light on it and retreated with disgust; yet one got caught. As they detected the beeswax concealed and disguised in this composition, so they will receive the earliest intelligence of the blossoming of the first flower which contains any sweet for them.

It is a genial and reassuring day; the mere warmth of the west wind amounts almost to balminess. The softness of the air mollifies our own dry and congealed substance. I sit down by a wall to see if I can muse again. We become, as it were, pliant and ductile again to strange but memorable influences; we are led a little way by our genius. We are affected like the earth, and yield to the elemental tenderness; winter breaks up within us; the frost is coming out of me, and I am heaved like the road; accumulated masses of ice and snow dissolve, and thoughts like a freshet pour down unwonted channels. A strain of music comes to solace the traveller over earth's downs and dignify his chagrins, the petty men whom he meets are the shadows of grander to come. Roads lead elsewhither than to Carlisle and Sudbury. The earth is uninhabited but fair to inhabit, like

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the old Carlisle road. Is then the road so rough that it should be neglected? Not only narrow but rough is the way that leadeth to life everlasting. Our experience does not wear upon us. It is seen to be fabulous or symbolical, and the future is worth expecting. Encouraged, I set out once more to climb the mountain of the earth, for my steps are symbolical steps, and in all my walking I have not reached the top of the earth yet.

In two or three places I hear the ground squirrel's pert chirrup or *qui vive* in the wall, like a bird or a cricket. Though I do not see him, the sun has reached him too.

Ah! then, as I was rising this crowning road, just beyond the old lime-kiln, there leaked into my open ear the faint peep of a hyla from some far pool. One little hyla somewhere in the fens, aroused by the genial season, crawls up the bank or a bush, squats on a dry leaf, and essays a note or two, which scarcely rends the air, does no violence to the zephyr, but yet breaks through all obstacles, thick-planted maples, and far over the downs to the ear of the listening naturalist, who will never see that piper in this world, — nor even the next, it may be, — as it were the first faint cry of the new-born year, notwithstanding the notes of birds. Where so long I have heard only the brattling and moaning of the wind, what means this tenser, far-piercing sound? All nature rejoices with one joy. If the hyla has revived again, may not I? He is heard the first warm, hazy evening.

Came home through the Hunt pasture. A warmer sunset marks the season. Some oaks have lost their leaves.

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Whatever your sex or position, life is a battle in which you are to show your pluck, and woe be to the coward. Whether passed on a bed of sickness or a tented field, it is ever the same fair play and admits no foolish distinction. Despair and postponement are cowardice and defeat. Men were born to succeed, not to fail.

J. Farmer saw a phœbe to-day. They build in his cellar. I hear a few peepers from over the meadows at my door in the evening.

March 22. As soon as the damp gardens are bared of snow and a really warm spring day arrives, the chickweed blossoms fairly.

As soon as those spring mornings arrive in which the birds sing, I am sure to be an early riser. I am waked by my genius. I wake to inaudible melodies and am surprised to find myself expecting the dawn in so serene and joyful and expectant a mood. I have an appointment with spring. She comes to the window to wake me, and I go forth an hour or two earlier than usual. It is by especial favor that I am waked, — not rudely but gently, as infants should be waked. Though as yet the trill of the chip-bird is not heard, — added, — like the sparkling bead which bursts on bottled cider or ale. When we wake indeed, with a double awakening, — not only from our ordinary nocturnal slumbers, but from our diurnal, — we burst through the thallus of our ordinary life with a proper exciple, we awake with emphasis.

6 A. M. — To Cliffs.

There is a white frost on the ground.

One robin really sings on the elms. Even the cockerel

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crows with new lustiness. Already I hear from the railroad the plaintive strain of a lark or two. They sit now conspicuous on the bare russet ground. The tinkling bubbles of the song sparrow are wafted from distant fence-posts, — little rills of song that begin to flow and tinkle as soon as the frost is out of the ground. The blackbird tries to sing, as it were with a bone in his throat, or to whistle and sing at once. Whither so fast, the restless creature, — *chuck, chuck*, at every rod, and now and then *whistle-ter-ee?* The *chill-lill* of the blue snowbirds is heard again. A partridge goes off on Fair Haven Hill-side with a sudden whir like the wad of a six-pounder, keeping just level with the tops of the sprouts. These birds and quails go off like a report.

It affects one's philosophy, after so long living in winter quarters, to see the day dawn from some hill. Our effete lowland town is fresh as New Hampshire. It is as if we had migrated and were ready to begin life again in a new country, with new hopes and resolutions. See your town with the dew on it, in as wild a morning mist (though thin) as ever draped it. To stay in the house all day, such reviving spring days as the past have been, bending over a stove and gnawing one's heart, seems to me as absurd as for a woodchuck to linger in his burrow. We have not heard the news then! Sucking the claws of our philosophy when there is game to be had!

The tapping of the woodpecker, *rat-tat-tat*, knocking at the door of some sluggish grub to tell him that the spring has arrived, and his fate, this is one of the season sounds, calling the roll of birds and insects, the reveille.

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The Cliff woods are comparatively silent. Not yet the woodland birds, except, perhaps, the woodpecker, so far as it migrates; only the orchard and river birds have arrived. Probably the improvements of men thus advance the season. This is the Bahamas and the tropics or turning-point to the redpoll. Is not the woodpecker (downy?) our first woodland bird? Come to see what effects the frost and snow and rain have produced on decaying trees, — what trunks will drum.

Fair Haven Pond will be open entirely in the course of the day. The oak plain is still red. There are no expanding leaves to greet and reflect the sun as it first falls over the hills. To see the first rays of the sun falling over an eastern wooded ridge on to a western wood and stream and lake! I go along the riverside to see the now novel reflections. The subsiding waters have left a thousand little isles, where willows and sweet-gale and the meadow itself appears. I hear the phœbe note of the chickadee, one taking it up behind another as in a catch, *phe-bee phe-bee*. The very earliest alder is in bloom and sheds its pollen. I detect a few catkins at a distance by their distinct yellowish color. This the first native flower. One of my willow catkins in the pitcher has opened at length.

That is an interesting morning when one first uses the warmth of the sun instead of fire; bathes in the sun, as anon in the river; eschewing fire, draws up to a garret window and warms his thoughts at nature's great central fire, as does the buzzing fly by his side. Like it, too, our muse, wiping the dust off her long-unused wings, goes blundering through the cobweb of criticism, more dusty

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still, — what venerable cobweb is that, which has hitherto escaped the broom, whose spider is invisible, but the *North American Review?* — and carries away the half of it.

No sap flows from the maples I cut into, except that one in Lincoln. What means it? *Hylodes Pickeringii*, a name that is longer than the frog itself! A description of animals, too, from a dead specimen only, as if, in a work on man, you were to describe a dead man only, omitting his manners and customs, his institutions and divine faculties, from want of opportunity to observe them, suggesting, perchance, that the colors of the eye are said to be much more brilliant in the living specimen, and that some cannibal, your neighbor, who has tried him on his table, has found him to be sweet and nutritious, good on the gridiron. Having had no opportunity to observe his habits, because you do not live in the country. Only dindons and dandies. Nothing is known of his habits. Food: seeds of wheat, beef, pork, and potatoes.

P. M. — To Martial Miles Meadow, by boat to Nut Meadow Brook.

Launched my new boat. It is very steady, too steady for me; does not toss enough and communicate the motion of the waves. Beside, the seats are not well arranged; when there are two in it, it requires a heavy stone in the stern to trim. But it holds its course very well with a side wind from being so flat from stem to stern.

The cranberries now make a show under water, and I

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always make it a point to taste a few. Fresh clamshells have been left by the muskrats at various heights. C. says he saw a painted tortoise yesterday. Very likely. We started two ducks feeding behind a low spit of meadow. From Brooks's plates I should think them widgeons.[1] They had the grayish-white breasts of the wood duck. They look as if they had dropped from heaven, motionless. Saw a green grasshopper and a common caterpillar, also another beetle similar to that of yesterday, except that this was a sort of slate-color with two or three fawn-colored marks on each wing-case.[2] The spear-heads of the skunk-cabbage are now quite conspicuous. I see that many flowers have been destroyed by the cold. In no case is the spathe unrolled, and I think it is not yet in blossom.

At Nut Meadow Brook, water-bugs and skaters are now plenty. I see the *Emys guttata* with red spots. Some which I think to be the same sex have striated scales, while others are smooth above. What I take to be the female has a flat-edged shell as well as depressed sternum. The yellow spots appear like some yellow wood let in. The spots are brightest when they are in the water. They are in couples. C. saw a frog. Some willows will be out in a day or two. Silvery catkins of all sizes shine afar. The two white feathers of the blue snowbird contrast prettily with the slate.

Returning to river, the water is blue as blue ink from this side. Hubbard's field a smooth russet bank lit by the setting sun and the pale skim-milk sky above.

[1] Brown thinks them sheldrakes. [See p. 65].

[2] *Vide* March 18, 1860.

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I told Stacy the other day that there was another volume of De Quincey's Essays (wanting to see it in his library). "I know it," says he, "but I shan't buy any more of them, for nobody reads them." I asked what book in his library was most read. He said, "The Wide, Wide World."

In a little dried and bleached tortoise-shell about an inch and three quarters long, I can easily study his anatomy and the house he lives in. His ribs are now distinctly revealed under his lateral scales, slanted like rafters to the ridge of his roof, for his sternum is so large that his ribs are driven round upon his back. It is wonderful to see what a perfect piece of dovetailing his house is, the different plates of his shell fitting into each other by a thousand sharp teeth or serrations, and the scales always breaking joints over them so as to bind the whole firmly together, all parts of his abode variously interspliced and dovetailed. An architect might learn much from a faithful study of it. There are three large diamond-shaped openings down the middle of the sternum, covered only by the scales, through [which], perhaps, he feels, he breasts the earth. His roof rests on four stout posts. This young one is very deep in proportion to its breadth. The *Emys guttata* is first found in warm, muddy ditches.

The bæomyces is not yet dried up.

March 23. 5 A. M. — I hear the robin sing before I rise.

6 A. M. — Up the North River.

A fresh, cool spring morning. The white maple may

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perhaps be said to begin to blossom to-day, — the male, — for the stamens, both anthers and filament, are conspicuous on some buds. It has opened unexpectedly, and a rich sight it is, looking up through the expanded buds to the sky. This and the aspen are the first trees that *ever grow large*, I believe, which show the influence of the season thus conspicuously. From Nawshawtuct I see the snow is off the mountains. A large aspen by the Island is unexpectedly forward. I already see the red anthers appearing. It will bloom in a day or two.

My boat is very good to float and go before the wind, but it has not *run* enough to it, — if that is the phrase, — but lugs too much dead water astern. However, it is all the steadier for it. Methinks it will not be a bad sailer.

I have seen for a week past fresh holes in the sand made by some early burrowing animal, probably the skunk.

One studies books of science merely to learn the language of naturalists, — to be able to communicate with them.

The frost in swamps and meadows makes it good walking there still. Away, away to the swamps, where the silver catkins of the swamp willow shine a quarter of a mile off, — those southward-penetrating vales of Rupert's Land.

The birds which are merely migrating or tarrying here for a season are especially gregarious now, — the redpoll, *Fringilla hyemalis*, fox-colored sparrow, etc. The white maples appear to be confined to the bank of the river.

I judge by the dead bodies of frogs, partially devoured, in brooks and ditches that many are killed in their hibernacula.

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Evelyn and others wrote when the language was in a tender, nascent state and could be moulded to express the shades of meaning; when sesquipedalian words, long since cut and apparently dried and drawn to mill, — not yet to the dictionary lumber-yard, — put forth a fringe of green sprouts here and there along in the angles of their rugged bark, their very bulk insuring some sap remaining; some florid suckers they sustain at least. Which words, split into shingles and laths, will supply poets for ages to come.

A man can't ask properly for a piece of bread and butter without some animal spirits. A child can't cry without them.

P. M. — To Howard's meadow.

The telegraph harp sounds more commonly, now that westerly winds prevail. The winds of winter are too boisterous, too violent or rude, and do not strike it at the right angle when I walk, so that it becomes one of the spring sounds.

The ice went out of Walden this forenoon; of Flint's Pond day before yesterday, I have no doubt. Methinks I see a more reddish chestnut sparrow, with distinct whiter lines and two white feathers in tail, or is this the song sparrow? With a faint, tinkling *cheep*. Grass or bay-winged finch? or could it have been field sparrow? but not my seringo. The pads at Howard's meadow are very forward, more than a foot high, their tips above the water.

The cat-tail down puffs and swells in your hand like a mist, or the conjurer's trick of filling a hat with feathers,

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for when you have rubbed off but a thimbleful, and can close and conceal the wound completely, the expanded down fills your hand to overflowing. Apparently there is a spring to the fine elastic threads which compose the down, which, after having been so long closely packed, on being the least relieved at the base, spring open apace into the form of parachutes to convey the seed afar. Where birds or the winds or ice have assaulted them, this has spread like an eruption.[1] Again, when I rub off the down of its spike with my thumb, I am surprised at the sensation of warmth it imparts to my hand, as it flushes over it magically, at the same time revealing a faint purplish-crimson tinge at the base of the down, as it rolls off and expands. It is a very pleasing experiment to try.

The buds of the shad-blossom look green. The crimson-starred flowers of the hazel begin to peep out, though the catkins have not opened. The alders are almost generally in full bloom, and a very handsome and interesting show they make with their graceful tawny pendants, inclining to yellow. They shake like ear-drops in the wind, perhaps the first completed ornaments with which the new year decks herself. Their yellow pollen is shaken down and colors my coat like sulphur as I go through them.

I go to look for mud turtles in Heywood's meadow. The alder catkins, just burst open, are prettily marked spirally by streaks of yellow, contrasting with alternate rows of rich reddish-brown scales, which make one revolution in the length of the catkin. I see trout glance

[1] *Vide* amount of seed in *Tribune*, Mar. 16, 1860.

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along the brook, as indeed a month ago. I hear in Heywood's north meadow the most unmusical low croak from one or two frogs, though it is half ice there yet, — a remarkable note with which to greet the new year, as if one's teeth slid off with a grating sound in cracking a nut, — but not a frog nor a dimple is to be seen.

Man cannot afford to be a naturalist, to look at Nature directly, but only with the side of his eye. He must look through and beyond her. To look at her is fatal as to look at the head of Medusa. It turns the man of science to stone. I feel that I am dissipated by so many observations. I should be the magnet in the midst of all this dust and filings. I knock the back of my hand against a rock, and as I smooth back the skin, I find myself prepared to study lichens there. I look upon man but as a fungus. I have almost a slight, dry headache as the result of all this observing. How to observe is how to behave. O for a little Lethe! To crown all, lichens, which are so thin, are described in the *dry* state, as they are most commonly, not most truly, seen. Truly, they are *dryly* described.

Without being the owner of any land, I find that I have a civil right in the river, — that, if I am not a landowner I am a water-owner. It is fitting, therefore, that I should have a boat, a cart, for this my farm. Since it is almost wholly given up to a few of us, while the other highways are much travelled, no wonder that I improve it. Such a one as I will choose to dwell in a township where there are most ponds and rivers and our range is widest. In relation to the river, I find my natural

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rights least infringed on. It is an extensive "common" still left. Certain savage liberties still prevail in the oldest and most civilized countries. I am pleased to find that, in Gilbert White's day, at least, the laborers in that part of England enjoyed certain rights of common in the royal forests, — so called, though no large wood, — where they cut their turf and other fuel, etc., etc., and obtained materials for broom-making, etc., when other labor failed. It is no longer so, according to his editor. Nobody legislates for me, for the way would be not to legislate at all.

I am surprised as well as delighted when any one wishes to know what I think. It is such a rare use they would make of me, as if they were acquainted with the tool. Commonly, if men want anything of me, it is only to know how many acres I make of their land, or, at most, what trivial news I have burdened myself with. They never will go to law for my meat. They prefer the shell.[1]

I saw probably a milkweed down in the air, the 20th.

March 24. 6 A. M. — By river to Hemlocks.

I see where the muskrats opened clams, probably last evening, close to the water's edge, or in the fork of a willow, or on a tussock just covered with water, the shells remaining, for they bring the clam to the air to eat it. The downy (?) woodpeckers are quite numerous this morning, the skirts of their coats barred with white and a large, long white spot on their backs. They have a smart, shrill peep or whistle, somewhat like

[1] [*Cape Cod, and Miscellanies*, p. 455; *Misc.*, Riv. 253.]

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a robin, but more metallic. Saw two gray squirrels coursing over the trees on the Rock Island. The forest is to them a vast web over which they run with as little hesitation as a spider across his net. They appear to have planned or to be familiar with their course before they start. The Island has several bunches of leaves in its trees, probably their nests. For several mornings the water has been perfectly smooth at six o'clock, but by seven the wind has risen with the ascending sun and the waves with the wind, and the day assumed a new and less promising aspect.

I think I may consider the shepherd's-purse in bloom to-day, for its flowers are nearly as conspicuous as those of the stellaria, which had its spring opening some days since, both being the worse for the frost this morning. Since the cold snap of the 14th, 15th, etc., have walked for the most part with unbuttoned coat, and for the most part without mittens.

I find the arrow-headed character on our plains, older than the written character in Persia.

Now are the windy days of March drying up the superabundant moisture. The river does not yet preserve a smooth reflecting surface far into the day. The meadows are mostly bare, the water going down, but perchance the April rains will fill them again.

Last afternoon was moist and cloudy and still, and the robin sang faintly, as if to usher in a warm rainstorm, but it cleared off at evening.

There are very slight but white mists on the river these mornings.

It spits a little snow this afternoon.

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P. M. — To Second Division Brook.

The white pine wood, freshly cut, piled by the side of the Charles Miles road, is agreeable to walk beside. I like the smell of it, all ready for the borers, and the rich light-yellow color of the freshly split wood and the purple color of the sap at the ends of the quarters, from which distill perfectly clear and crystalline tears, colorless and brilliant as diamonds, tears shed for the loss of a forest in which is a world of light and purity, its life oozing out. These beautiful accidents that attend on man's works! Fit pendants to the ears of the Queen of Heaven! How full of interest is one of these wrecks of a wood! C. declares that Miss Ripley spent one whole season studying the lichens on a stick of wood they were about to put on the fire. I am surprised to find that these terebinthine (?) tears have a hard (seemingly soft as water) not film but transparent skin over them. How many curiosities are brought to us with our wood! The trees and the lichens that clothe them, the forest warrior and his shield adhering to him.

I have heard of two skeletons dug up in Concord within twenty years, one, at least, undoubtedly an Indian. This was as they were digging away the bank directly behind I. Moore's house. Dr. Jarvis pronounced it an Indian. The other near the jail.

I tied a string round what I take to be the *Alnus incana*, two or three rods this side Jenny's Road, on T. Wheeler's ditch. The bark is of a more opaque and lighter color, the fruit more orbicular, but the most sure difference was that a part of the pistillate catkins were upright. It was not quite in bloom, but neither

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were some of those whose fertile catkins drooped, nor could I yet see a difference in the color of the opened catkins.

At Second Division, saw pollywogs again, full grown with long tails. The cowslip leaves are in many places above water, and I see what I suppose is that slender rush two inches high at the bottom of the water like a fine grass. What is that foliaceous plant amid the mosses in the wet which resembles the algæ? I find nothing like it in Hooker under head of Algæ. In many cases I find that the willow cones are a mere dense cluster of loose leaves, suggesting that the scales of cones of all kinds are only modified leaves, a crowding and stinting of the leaves, as the stem becomes a thorn; and in this view those conical bunches of leaves of so many of the pine family have relation to the cones of the tree as well in origin as in form. The leaf, perchance, becomes calyx, cone, husk, and nutshell.

The past has been a remarkable winter; such a one as I do not remember. The ground has been bare almost all the time, and the river has been open about as much. I got but one chance to take a turn on skates over half an acre. The first snow more than an inch deep fell January 13th, but probably was not a foot deep and was soon gone. There was about as much more fell February 13th, and no more to be remembered, *i. e.* only two or three inches since. I doubt if there has been one day when it was decidedly better sleighing than wheeling. I have hardly heard the sound of sleigh-bells. A yellow lily bud already yellow at the Tortoise Ditch, Nut Meadow.

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Those little holes in sandy fields and on the sides of hills, which I see so numerously as soon as the snow is off and the frost out of the ground, are probably made by the skunk in search of bugs and worms, as Rice says. His tracks in the winter are very numerous, considering how rarely he is seen at that season. Probably the tortoises do not lay their eggs so early as I thought. The skunk gets them too.

March 25. I forgot to say yesterday that several little groves of alders on which I had set my eye had been cut down the past winter. One in Trillium Woods was a favorite because it was so dense and regular, its outline rounded as if it were a moss bed; and another more than two miles from this, at Dugan's, which I went to see yesterday, was then being cut, like the former, to supply charcoal for powder. Dugan does most of this work about the town. The willow hedges by causeways are regularly trimmed and peeled. The small wood brings eight dollars a cord. Alders, also, and poplars are extensively used.

6 A. M. — To Brister's Hill.

The *Fringilla hyemalis* sing *most* in concert of any bird nowadays that I hear. Sitting near together on an oak or pine in the woods or an elm in the village, they keep up a very pleasant, enlivening, and incessant jingling and twittering *chill-lill-lill*, so that it is difficult to distinguish a single bird's note, — parts of it much like a canary. This sound advances me furthest toward summer, unless it be the note of the lark, who, by the way, is the most steady singer at present. Notwith-

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standing the raw and windy mornings, it will sit on a low twig or tussock or pile of manure in the meadow and sing for hours, as sweetly and plaintively as in summer. I see the white-breasted nuthatch, head downward, on the oaks. First heard his rapid and, as it were, angry *gnah gnah gna*, and a *faint*, wiry creaking note about grubs as he moved round the tree. I thought I heard the note of a robin and of a bluebird from an oak. It proceeded from a small bird about as big as a blue-[bird], which did not perch like a woodpecker, uttering first some notes robin-like or like the golden robin, then perfect bluebird warbles,[1] and then it flew off with a flight like neither. From what I saw and heard afterward I suspected it *might* be a downy woodpecker. I see fine little green beds of moss peeping up at Brister's Spring above the water.

When I saw the fungi in my lamp, I was startled and awed, as if I were stooping too low, and should next be found classifying carbuncles and ulcers. Is there not sense in the mass of men who ignore and confound these things, and never see the cryptogamia on the one side any more than the stars on the other? Underfoot they catch a transient glimpse of what they call toadstools, mosses, and frog-spittle, and overhead of the heavens, but they can all read the pillars on a Mexican quarter. They ignore the worlds above and below, keep straight along, and do not run their boots down at the heel as I do. How to keep the heels up I have been obliged to study carefully, turning the nigh foot painfully on side-hills. I find that the shoemakers, to save

[1] Was it not the fox-colored sparrow?

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a few iron heel-pegs, do not complete the rows on the inside by three or four, — the very place in the whole boot where they are most needed, — which has fatal consequences to the buyer. I often see the tracks of them in the paths. It is as if you were to put no underpinning under one corner of your house. I have managed to cross very wet and miry places dry-shod by moving rapidly on my heels. I always use leather strings tied in a hard knot; they untie but too easily even then.

The various lights in which you may regard the earth, *e. g.* the dry land as sea bottom, or the sea bottom as a dry down.

Those willow cones appear to be galls, for, cutting open one of the leafy ones, I found a hard core such as are often seen bare, the nucleus of the cone, and in it a grub. This gall had completely checked the extension of the twig, and the leaves had collected and overflowed it as the water at a dam. Perchance when the twig is vigorous and full of sap the cone is leafy; otherwise a hard cone.

11 A. M. — To Framingham.

A Lincoln man heard a flock of geese, he thinks it was day before yesterday.

Measured a white oak in front of Mr. Billings's new house, about one mile beyond Saxonville, — twelve and one twelfth feet in circumference at four feet from the ground (the smallest place within ten feet from the ground), fourteen feet circumference at ground, and a great spread.

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Frank's place is on the Concord River within less than ten miles of Whitehall Pond in Hopkinton, one of [the sources], perhaps the principal source, of the river. I thought that a month hence the stream would not be twenty feet wide there. Mr. Wheeler, auctioneer, of Framingham, told me that the timber of the factory at Saxonville was brought by water to within about one mile of where the mill stands. There is a slight rapid.

Brown says that he saw the north end of Long Pond covered with ice the 22d, and that R. W. E. saw the south end entirely open. The red maple buds already redden the swamps and riverside. The winter rye greens the ground.

March 26. There is a large specimen of what I take to be the common alder by the poplar at Egg Rock, five inches in diameter. It may be considered as beginning to bloom to-day. Some white maples appear still as backward as the red.

Saw about 10 A. M. a gaggle of geese, forty-three in number, in a very perfect harrow flying northeasterly. One side [of] the harrow was a little longer than the other. They appeared to be four or five feet apart. At first I heard faintly, as I stood by Minott's gate, borne to me from the southwest through the confused sounds of the village, the indistinct honking of geese. I was somewhat surprised to find that Mr. Loring at his house should have heard and seen the same flock. I should think that the same flock was commonly seen and heard from the distance of a mile east and west. It is remarkable that we commonly see geese go over in the spring

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about 10 o'clock in the morning, as if they were accustomed to stop for the night at some place southward whence they reached us at that time. Goodwin saw six geese in Walden about the same time.

The scales of the alder run to leaves sometimes.

P. M. — Up Assabet to stone-heaps, in boat.

A warm, moist, April-like afternoon, with wet-looking sky, and misty. For the first time I take off my coat. Everywhere are hovering over the river and floating, wrecked and struggling, on its surface, a miller-like insect, without mealy wings, very long and narrow, six-legged with two long feelers and, I believe, two long slender grayish wings, from my harbor to the heaps, or a couple of miles at least, food for fishes. This was the degree and kind of warmth to bring them forth. The tortoises, undoubtedly painted, drop now in several instances from the limbs and floating rails on which they had come out to sun. I notice by the Island a yellow scum on the water close to the shore, which must be the pollen of the alders just above. This, too, is perhaps food for fishes.

Up the Assabet, scared from his perch a stout hawk, — the red-tailed undoubtedly, for I saw very plainly the cow-red when he spread his wings from off his tail (and rump?). I rowed the boat three times within gunshot before he flew, twice within four rods, while he sat on an oak over the water, — I think because I had two ladies with me, which was as good as bushing the boat. Each time, or twice at least, he made a motion to fly before he started. The ends of his primaries looked

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very ragged against the sky. This is the hen-hawk of the farmer, the same, probably, which I have scared off from the Cliff so often. It was an interesting eagle-like object, as he sat upright on his perch with his back to us, now and then looking over his shoulder, the broad-backed, flat-headed, curve-beaked bird.

Heard a pewee. This, it seems to me, is the first true pewee day, though they have been here some time. What is that cress-like weed in and on the edge of the river opposite Prescott Barrett's? A fresher and more luxuriant growth of green leaf than I have seen yet; as if it had grown in winter.

I do not perceive any fresh additions to the stone-heaps, though perhaps I did not examine carefully enough.

Went forth just after sunset. A storm gathering, an April-like storm. I hear now in the dusk only the song sparrow along the fences and a few hylas at a distance. And now the rattling drops compel me to return.

March 27. Sunday. After a long spell of fair weather, the first April-like rain fell last night. But it is fair again this morning with a cool breeze, which will hardly permit the catkins to open. I miss very much the early willows along the railroad, which have been cut down the past winter to prevent catching fire from the engines and spreading to the woods. And hence my neighbor the switch-man has bean-poles to sell.

P. M. — To Martial Miles's.

The skunk-cabbage in full bloom under the Clamshell

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Hill; undoubtedly was open yesterday afternoon. Perhaps I might have found one a day earlier still, had I looked here carefully. Call it the 26th. The spathes of those in bloom are open *at least* half an inch wide. Many are decaying, having been killed by that severe cold a fortnight ago, probably; else it would have blossomed earlier. Nevertheless, the spathes appear to furnish a remarkable protection to the spadix, they are so curved over it as well as involved about it, and so roomy. What meant those little pellets of the pollen in one of these vegetable shells? Had some bee left them yesterday? The inside of the shell-like vessel which the spathe makes contains considerable of the yellow pollen of the flower. I fear I may not have got so early a specimen of this as of the other plants thus far, after all. Clusters of stout, curved spear-heads about three inches high; in some the mahogany-color, in some the yellowish green prevails. Some are a very dark mahogany, others almost a clear light yellow. Also the thistles, johnswort (radical leaves), buttercups, clover, mullein, have grown very decidedly. I see but one tortoise (*Emys guttata*) in Nut Meadow Brook now; the weather is too raw and gusty.

The hazel is fully out. The 23d was perhaps full early to date them. It is in some respects the most interesting flower yet, though so minute that only an observer of nature, or one who looked for them, would notice it. It is the highest and richest colored yet, — ten or a dozen little rays at the end of the buds which are [at] the ends and along the sides of the bare stems. Some of the flowers are a light, some a dark crimson. The high

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color of this minute, unobserved flower, at this cold, leafless, and almost flowerless season! It is a beautiful greeting of the spring, when the catkins are scarcely relaxed and there are no signs of life in the bush. Moreover, they are so tender that I never get one home in good condition. They wilt and turn black.

Tried to see the faint-croaking frogs at J. P. Brown's Pond in the woods. They are remarkably timid and shy; had their noses and eyes out, croaking, but all ceased, dove, and concealed themselves, before I got within a rod of the shore. Stood perfectly still amid the bushes on the shore, before one showed himself; finally five or six, and all eyed me, gradually approached me within three feet to reconnoitre, and, though I waited about half an hour, would not utter a sound nor take their eyes off me, — were plainly affected by curiosity. Dark brown and some, perhaps, dark green, about two inches long; had their noses and eyes out when they croaked. If described at all, must be either young of *Rana pipiens* or the *R. palustris*.

That earliest willow I can find, behind Miles's, sheltered by a wood on the north but on high and dry land (!!), will bloom to-morrow if it is pleasant.[1] I see the yellow now. I see the earth freshly stirred and tracks about the woodchuck-holes. So they have been out. You hear that faint croak of frogs and, toward night, a few hylas regularly now. Did not see frog spawn in the pool by Hubbard's Wood. Still the hardhack and meadow-sweet tops are perfect.

The base of the pitch pine cone which, closed, was

[1] *Vide* [p. 80].

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semicircular, after it has opened becomes more or less flat and horizontal by the crowding of the scales backward upon the smaller and imperfect ones next the stem, and, viewed on this flat end, they are handsomely arranged in curving rays.

March 28. My Aunt Maria asked me to read the life of Dr. Chalmers, which however I did not promise to do. Yesterday, Sunday, she was heard through the partition shouting to my Aunt Jane, who is deaf, "Think of it! He stood half an hour to-day to hear the frogs croak, and he would n't read the life of Chalmers."

6 A. M. — To Cliffs.

Too cold for the birds to sing much. There appears to be more snow on the mountains. Many of our spring rains are snow-storms there. The woods ring with the cheerful jingle of the *F. hyemalis*. This is a very trig and compact little bird, and appears to be in good condition. The straight edge of slate on their breasts contrasts remarkably with the white from beneath; the short, light-colored bill is also very conspicuous amid the dark slate; and when they fly from you, the two white feathers in their tails are very distinct at a good distance. They are very lively, pursuing each other from bush to bush. Could that be the fox-colored sparrow I saw this morning, — that reddish-brown sparrow? [1]

I do not now think of a bird that *hops* so distinctly, rapidly, and commonly as the robin, with its head up.

Why is the pollen of flowers commonly yellow?

[1] Probably.

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I saw yesterday, on the warm pool by Hubbard's Wood, long, narrow blades of reddish grass, bent nearly at right angles and floating on the water, lighter-colored beneath (lake-colored?). The floating part was from six inches to ten or twelve in length. This is much the greatest growth of grass that I have seen, for it is scarcely anywhere yet visibly green. It is an agreeable surprise, flushing the cheek, this warm color on the surface of some warm pool.

P. M. — To Assabet.

Saw eleven black ducks near the bathing-place on the Assabet, flying up the stream. Came within three or four rods of me, then wheeled and went down. Their faint quack sounded much [like] the croak of the frogs occasionally heard now in the pools. As they wheeled and went off, made a very fine whistling sound, which yet I think was not made by their wings.

Opened an ant-hill about two and a half feet wide and eight inches high, in open land. It was light and dry, and apparently made by the ants; free from stones or sticks for about a foot in depth. The ants, which were red with black abdomens and were about a third of an inch long, crawled about sluggishly on being exposed. Their galleries, a quarter of an inch and more in diameter, with ants in them, extended to the depth of two feet in the yellow sand, and how much further I don't know. Opened another in the woods with black ants of the same size in the same condition.

This is a raw, cloudy, and disagreeable day. Yet I think you are most likely to see wild fowl this weather.

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I saw in Dodd's yard and flying thence to the alders by the river what I think must be the tree sparrow,[1] — a ferruginous crowned, or headed, and partly winged bird, light beneath, with a few of the *F. hyemalis* in company. It sang sweetly, much like some notes of a canary. One pursued another. It was not large enough for the fox-colored sparrow. Perhaps I have seen it before within the month.

As near as I can make out, the hawks or falcons I am likely to see here are the American sparrow hawk, the fish hawk, the goshawk, the short-winged buzzard (if this is the same with Brown's stuffed sharp-shinned or slate-colored hawk, — not slate in his specimen; is not this the common small hawk that soars?), the red-tailed hawk (have we the red-shouldered hawk, about the same size and aspect with the last?), the hen-harrier. (I suppose it is the adult of this with the slate-color over meadows.)

March 29. 6 A. M. — To Leaning Hemlocks, by boat. The sun has just risen, but there is only a now clear saffron belt next the east horizon; all the rest of the sky is covered with clouds, broken into lighter and darker shades. An agreeable yellow sunlight falls on the western fields and the banks of the river. Whence this yellow tinge? Probably a different light would be reflected if there were no dark clouds above. A somewhat milder morning than yesterday, and the river as usual quite smooth. From Cheney's boat-house I hear very distinctly the tapping of a woodpecker at the Island about

[1] No doubt of it.

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a quarter of a mile. Undoubtedly could hear it twice as far at least, if still, over the water. At every stroke of my paddle, small silvery bubbles about the size of a pin-head, dashed from the surface, slide or roll over the smooth surface a foot or two. On approaching the Island, I am surprised to hear the scolding, cackle-like note of the pigeon woodpecker, a prolonged loud sound somewhat like one note of the robin. This was the tapper, on the old hollow aspen which the small woodpeckers so much frequent. Unless the latter make *exactly* the same sound with the former, then the pigeon woodpecker has come!! But I could not get near enough to distinguish his size and colors. He went up the Assabet, and I heard him cackling and tapping far ahead.

The catkins of the *Populus tremuloides* are just beginning to open, — to curl over and downward like caterpillars. Yesterday proved too cold, undoubtedly, for the willow to open, and unless I learn better, I shall give the poplar the precedence, dating both, however, from to-day.[1]

It would be worth the while to attend more to the different notes of the blackbirds. Methinks I may have seen the female red-wing within a day or two; or what are these purely black ones without the red shoulder? It is pleasant to see them scattered about on the drying meadow. The red-wings will stand close to the water's edge, looking larger than usual, with their red shoulders very distinct and handsome in that position, and sing *okolee*, or *bob-y-lee*, or what-not. Others, on the tops of trees over your head, out of a fuzzy beginning spit forth a clear, shrill whistle incessantly, for what purpose I

[1] *Vide* [p. 70].

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don't know. Others, on the elms over the water, utter still another note, each time lifting their wings slightly. Others are flying across the stream with a loud *char-r, char-r.*

Looking at the mouth of a woodchuck-hole and at low places, as on the moss, in the meadows, [I see] that those places are sprinkled with little pellets or sometimes salt-shaped masses of frost some inches apart, apparently like snow. This is one kind of frost.

There is snow and ice still along the edge of the meadows on the north side of woods; the latter even five or six inches thick in some places.

The female flowers of the white maple, crimson stigmas from the same rounded masses of buds with the male, are now quite abundant. I think they have not come out more than a day or two. I did not notice them the 26th, though I did not look carefully for them. The two sorts of flowers are not only on the same tree and the same twig and sometimes in the same bud, but also sometimes in the same little cup. The recent shoot of the white maple is now a yellowish brown, sprinkled with ashy dots.

I am in some uncertainty about whether I do not confound several kinds under the name of the downy woodpecker. It not only flies *volatu undoso*, but you hear, as it passes over you, the strong ripple of its wings.

Two or three times, when a visitor stayed into evening, and it proved a dark night, I was obliged to conduct him to the cart-path in the rear of my house and then point out to him the direction he was to pursue, and in keeping which he was to be guided rather by his feet

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than his eyes. One very dark night I directed thus on their way two young men who had been fishing in the pond, who would otherwise have been at a loss what course to take. They lived about a mile off, and were quite used to the woods. A day or two after, one of them told me that they wandered about the greater part of the night, close by their own premises, and did not get home till toward morning, by which time, as there were several heavy showers in the course of the night, and the leaves were very wet, they were drenched to their skins. I have heard of many going astray, even in the village streets, when the darkness was so thick that you could cut it with a knife, as the phrase is. Some who lived in the outskirts, having come to town shopping with their wagons, have been obliged to put up for the night, and gentlemen and ladies making a call have gone half a mile out of their way, feeling the sidewalk only and not knowing when they turned, and were obliged to inquire the way at the first house they discovered. Even one of the village doctors was thus lost in the heart of the village on a nocturnal mission, and spent nearly the whole night feeling the fences and the houses, being, as he said, ashamed to inquire. If one with the vision of an owl, or as in broad daylight, could have watched his motions, they would have been ludicrous indeed. It is a novel and memorable acquaintance one may make thus with the most familiar objects. It is a surprising and memorable and, I may add, valuable experience to be lost in the woods, especially at night. Sometimes in a snow-storm, even by day, one will come out upon a well-known road and yet find it impossible

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to tell which way leads to the village. Though your reason tells you that you have travelled it one hundred times, yet no object looks familiar, but it is as strange to you as if it were in Tartary. By night, of course, the perplexity is infinitely greater. We are constantly steering like pilots by certain well-known beacons and headlands, though we are not conscious of it, and if we go beyond our usual course we still preserve the bearing of some neighboring cape, and not till we are completely lost or turned round, — for a man needs only to be turned round once with his eyes shut in this world to be lost, — do we appreciate the vastness and strangeness of nature. Every man has once more to learn the points of compass as often as he awakes, whether from sleep or from any abstraction. In fact, not till we are lost do we begin to realize where we are, and the infinite extent of our relations.[1]

A pleasant short voyage is that to the Leaning Hemlocks on the Assabet, just round the Island under Nawshawtuct Hill. The river here has in the course of ages gullied into the hill, at a curve, making a high and steep bank, on which a few hemlocks grow and overhang the deep, eddying basin. For as long as I can remember, one or more of these has always been slanting over the stream at various angles, being undermined by it, until one after another, from year to year, they fall in and are swept away. This is a favorite voyage for ladies to make, down one stream and up the other, plucking the lilies by the way and landing on the Island, and concluding with a walk on Nawshawtuct Hill.

[1] [*Walden*, pp. 188–190; Riv. 266–268.]

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The Leaning Hemlocks

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This which Gilbert White says of the raven is applicable to our crow: "There is a peculiarity belonging to ravens that must draw the attention even of the most incurious — they spend all their leisure time in striking and cuffing each other on the wing in a kind of playful skirmish."

P. M. — To early willow behind Martial Miles's.

A bright, sunny, but yet rather breezy and cool afternoon. On the railroad I hear the telegraph. This is the lyre that is as old as the world. I put my ear to the post, and the sound seems to be in the core of the post, directly against my ear. This is all of music. The utmost refinements of art, methinks, can go no further. This is one of those days divided against itself, when there is a cool wind but a warm sun, when there is little or no coolness proper to this locality, but it is wafted to us probably from the snow-clad northwest, and hence in sheltered places it is very warm. However, the sun is rapidly prevailing over the wind, and it is already warmer than when I came out.

Four ducks, two by two, are sailing conspicuously on the river. There appear to be two pairs. In each case one two-thirds white and another grayish-brown and, I think, smaller. They are very shy and fly at fifty rods' distance. Are they whistlers? The white are much more white than those I saw the other day and at first thought summer ducks.[1] Would it not be well to carry a

[1] [See p. 40.] These were either mergansers or the golden-eye; I think the former, *i. e. Mergus serrator*, or red-breasted merganser (?), or sheldrake.

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spy-glass in order to watch these shy birds such as ducks and hawks? In some respects, methinks, it would be better than a gun. The latter brings them nearer dead, but the former alive. You can identify the species better by killing the bird, because it was a dead specimen that was so minutely described, but you can study the habits and appearance best in the living specimen. These ducks first flew north, or somewhat against the wind (was it to get under weigh?), then wheeled, flew nearer me, and went south up-stream, where I saw them afterward.

In one of those little holes which I refer to the skunk, I found part of the shell of a *reddish* beetle or dor-bug. Both hole and beetle looked quite fresh. Saw small ants there active.

Under the south side of Clamshell Hill, in the sun, the air is filled with those black fuzzy gnats, and I hear a fine hum from them. The first humming of insects — unless of those honey-bees the other day — of the season. I can find no honey-bees in the skunk-cabbage this pleasant afternoon. I find that many of the oak-balls are pierced, and their inhabitants have left them; they have a small round hole in them. The rest have still thirty or forty small white maggots about one twelfth of an inch long. Thus far I have not seen these balls but on the black oak, and some are still full of them, like apples.

Walking along near the edge of the meadow under Lupine Hill, I slumped through the sod into a muskrat's nest, for the sod was only two inches thick over it, which was enough when it was frozen. I laid it open with my hands. There were three or four channels or hollowed

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paths, a rod or more in length, not merely worn but made in the meadow, and centring at the mouth of this burrow. They were three or four inches deep, and finally became indistinct and were lost amid the cranberry vines and grass toward the river. The entrance to the burrow was just at the edge of the upland, here a gently sloping bank, and was probably just beneath the surface of the water six weeks ago. It was about twenty-five rods distant from the true bank of the river. From this a straight gallery, about six inches in diameter every way, sloped upward about eight feet into the bank just beneath the turf, so that the end was about a foot higher than the entrance. There was a somewhat circular enlargement about one foot in horizontal diameter and the same depth with the gallery; and [in] it was nearly a peck of coarse meadow stubble, showing the marks of the scythe, with which was mixed accidentally a very little of the moss which grew with it. Three short galleries, only two feet long, were continued from this centre somewhat like rays toward the high land, as if they had been prepared in order to be ready for a sudden rise of the water, or had been actually made so far under such an emergency. The nest was of course thoroughly wet and, humanly speaking, uncomfortable, though the creature could breathe in it. But it is plain that the muskrat cannot be subject to the toothache. I have no doubt this was made and used last winter, for the grass was as fresh as that in the meadow (except that it was pulled up), and the sand which had been taken out lay partly in a flattened heap in the meadow, and no grass had sprung up through it.

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In the course of the above examination I made a very interesting discovery. When I turned up the thin sod from over the damp cavity of the nest, I was surprised to see at this hour of a pleasant day what I took to be beautiful frost crystals of a rare form, — frost bodkins I was in haste to name them, for around the fine white roots of the grass, apparently the herd's-grass, which were from one to two or more inches long, reaching downward into the dark, damp cavern (though the green blades had scarcely made so much growth above; indeed, the growth was scarcely visible there), appeared to be lingering still into the middle of this warm afternoon rare and beautiful frost crystals exactly in the form of a bodkin, about one sixth of an inch wide at base and tapering evenly to the lower end, sometimes the upper part of the core being naked for half an inch, which last gave them a slight resemblance to feathers, though they were not flat but round, and at the abrupt end of the rootlet (as if cut off) a larger, clear drop. On examining them more closely, feeling and tasting them, I found that it was not frost but a clear, crystalline dew in almost invisible drops, concentrated from the dampness of the cavern, and perhaps melted frost still reserving by its fineness its original color, thus regularly arranged around the delicate white fibre; and, looking again, incredulous, I discerned extremely minute white threads or gossamer standing out on all sides from the main rootlet in this form and affording the core for these drops. Yet on those fibres which had lost their dew, none of these minute threads appeared. There they pointed downward somewhat

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like stalactites, or very narrow caterpillar brushes. It impressed me as a wonderful piece of chemistry, that the very grass we trample on and esteem so cheap should be thus wonderfully nourished, that this spring greenness was not produced by coarse and cheap means, but in sod, out of sight, the most delicate and magical processes are going on. The half is not shown. The very sod is replete with mechanism far finer than that of a watch, and yet it is cast under our feet to be trampled on. The process that goes on in the sod and the dark, about the minute fibres of the grass, — the chemistry and the mechanics, — before a single green blade can appear above the withered herbage, if it could [be] adequately described, would supplant all other revelations. We are acquainted with but one side of the sod. I brought home some tufts of the grass in my pocket, but when I took it out I could not at first find those pearly white fibres and thought that they were lost, for they were shrunk to dry brown threads; and, as for the still finer gossamer which supported the roscid droplets, with few exceptions they were absolutely undiscoverable, — they no longer stood out around the core, — so fine and delicate was their organization. It made me doubt almost if there were not actual, substantial, though invisible cores to the leaflets and veins of the hoar frost. And can these almost invisible and tender fibres penetrate the earth where there is no cavern? Or is what we call the solid earth porous and cavernous enough for them?

A wood tortoise in Nut Meadow Brook.

I see a little three-spotted sparrow, — apparently

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the same seen March 18th, — with its mate, not so spotted. The first apparently the female, quite tame. The male sings a regular song sparrow strain, and they must be that, I think. Keep up a faint chip. Apparently thinking of a nest.

The trout glances like a film from side to side and under the bank.

Saw a solid mass of green conferva at the bottom of the brook, waved with the sand which had washed into it, which made it look exactly like a rock partly covered with green lichens. I was surprised when I thrust a stick into it and was undeceived. Observe the shadow of water flowing rapidly over a shelving bottom in this brook, producing the appearance of sand washing along.

Tried several times to catch a skater. Got my hand close to him; grasped at him as quick as possible; was sure I had got him this time; let the water run out between my fingers; hoped I had not crushed him; opened my hand; and lo! he was not there. I never succeeded in catching one. What are those common snails in the mud in ditches, with their feet out, for some time past?

The early willow will bloom to-morrow. Its catkins have lost many of their scales. The crowded yellow anthers are already bursting out through the silvery down, like the sun of spring through the clouds of winter. How measuredly this plant has advanced, sensitive to the least change of temperature, its expanding not to be foretold, unless you can foretell the weather. This is the earliest willow that I know.

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Yet it is on a dry upland. There is a great difference in localities in respect to warmth, and a corresponding difference in the blossoming of plants of the same species. But can this be the same species with that early one in Miles's Swamp? Its catkins have been picked off, by what?

Dugan tells me that three otter were dug out the past winter in Deacon Farrar's wood-lot, side of the swamp, by Powers and Willis of Sudbury. He has himself seen one in the Second Division woods. He saw two pigeons to-day. *Prated* [*sic*] for them; they came near and then flew away. He saw a woodchuck yesterday. I believe I saw the slate-colored marsh hawk to-day. I saw water-worn stones by the gates of three separate houses in Framingham the other day. The grass now looks quite green in those places where the water recently stood, in grassy hollows where the melted snow collects. Dugan wished to get some guinea-hens to keep off the hawks.

Those fine webs of the grass fibres stood out as if drawn out and held up by electricity.

March 30. April weather, alternate rain and brightening up. I am not sure my willow will bloom fairly to-day. How warily the flowers open! not to be caught out too early, not bursting into bloom with the first genial heat, but holding back as if foreseeing the transient checks, and yielding only to the absolute progress of the season. However, probably some hardy flowers which are quite ready will open just before a cold snap, while others, which were almost

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equally advanced, may be retarded a week. Is it not the pollen which the bees seek in the earliest flowers, as the skunk-cabbage (?) and the willow, having occasion for bee-bread first? As usual, the robin sings more this cloudy and showery morning than I have heard it yet.

P. M. — To Cliffs.

The gooseberry leaves in the garden are just *beginning* to show a little green. Is this the same with the wild? Lilacs have buds equally advanced.

Seeing one of those little holes (which I have thought were made by beetles or dor-bugs) in Wheeler's upland rye-field near the Burying-Ground, the mouth walled about like a well with a raised curb with fragments of dried grass and little bits of wood, I resolved to explore it, but after the first shovelful I lost the trace of it, for I had filled it with sand. Finding another, I stuck a mullein stalk into it to a surprising depth, and then could dig with confidence. At fifteen or sixteen inches from the surface, I found a black spider, nearly three quarters of an inch long in the body, clasping the mullein, but very sluggish, only moving its legs, but not crawling away. In another hole I found another similar spider in exactly the same condition and at the same depth, but in this case my stick went down only one foot and was there stopped by ice, which filled the hole, but after digging through an inch of frozen ground, I found the spider in the dry cavity, three or four inches deeper. How the water stood so as to freeze above him I don't know. I could see nothing like a nest at the bottom, nor any

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enlargement of the hole. The soil is very sandy and light. In the sand beneath the frost was a moving common red earthworm. I did not expect to find frost in such a place now.

Now commences the season for fires in the woods. The winter, and now the sun and winds, have dried the old leaves more thoroughly than ever, and there are no green leaves to shade the ground or to check the flames, and these high March winds are the very ones to spread them. It is a dry, windy, and withal hazy day, — that blue smoky haze that reminds of fires, which some have thought the effect of distant fires in the woods, which perhaps is only a finer mist, produced by the increased heat of the sun on an earth abounding in moisture. Is not this White's London smoke (*vide* Commonplace-Book), and followed by rain? The woods look peculiarly dry and russet. There is as yet no new greenness in the landscape. With these thoughts and impressions I had not gone far before I saw the smoke of a fire on Fair Haven Hill. Some boys were going *sassafrasing*, for boys will have some pursuit peculiar to every season. A match came in contact with a marble, nobody knew how, and suddenly the fire flashed up the broad open hillside, consuming the low grass and sweet-fern and leaving a smoking, blackened waste. A few glowing stumps, with spadefuls of fresh earth thrown on them, the white ashes here and there on the black ground, and the not disagreeable scent of smoke and cinders was all that was left when I arrived.

I see from the Cliffs that the young oaks look thin,

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are losing their leaves. A warm, breezy wind roves in the woods. Dry leaves, which I at first mistake for birds, go sailing through the air in front of the Cliff. The distant highways, I perceive, begin to be dusty; sandy fields to be dry. There is an inspiriting strong ripple on the river, which seems to flow up-stream.

I see again that same kind of clouds that I saw the 10th of last April, low in the sky; higher and overhead those great downy clouds, equal to the intervals of celestial blue, with glowing edges and with wet bases. The sky is mapped with them as with New Hollands and Borneos. There are mares'-tails and rosettes in the west.

The motions of a hawk correcting the flaws in the wind by raising his shoulder from time to time, are much like those of a leaf yielding to them. For the little hawks are hunting now. You have not to sit long on the Cliffs before you see one. I still see fresh earth where the skunk, if it is he, has been probing last night for insects about the pines in pastures and any dead twigs that afford lurking-places. Saw a dead cricket in one. They make a hole sometimes so deep and pointed that only two fingers will fathom it. If dor-bugs make such holes as the spiders, they can easily find them.

I am surprised to find many of the early sedge already out. It may have been out a day or two. I should put it between the skunk-cabbage and the aspen, — at any rate, before the last. Little black ants in the pitchy-looking earth about the base of white pines in woods are still dormant.

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Ah, those youthful days! are they never to return? when the walker does not too curiously observe particulars, but sees, hears, scents, tastes, and feels only himself, — the phenomena that show themselves in him, — his expanding body, his intellect and heart. No worm or insect, quadruped or bird, confined his view, but the unbounded universe was his. A bird is now become a mote in his eye.

Dug into what I take to be a woodchuck's burrow in the low knoll below the Cliffs. It was in the side of the hill and sloped gently downward at first, diagonally, into the hill about five feet, perhaps westerly, then turned and ran north into the hill about three feet, then northwest further into the hill four feet, then north again five feet, then northeast I know not how far, the last five feet perhaps ascending. It was the full length of the shovel from the surface of the ground to the bottom of the hole when I left off, owing, perhaps, to the rise of the hill. The hole was arched above and flat on the bottom like an oven, about five inches [in] diameter at base, and it seemed to have a pretty hard crust as I broke into it. There was a little enlargement, perhaps ten inches in diameter, in the angle at the end of twelve feet. It was thus. It was a wonder where the sand was conveyed to, for there was not a wheelbarrow-load at the entrance.

March 31. The robins sing at the very earliest dawn. I wake with their note ringing in my ear.

6 A. M. — To Island by boat.

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The pickerels dart away from the shallows, where they have spent the night. It is spearing-time, then. The chickadee sings, not merely *phebe* but *phe-be-be*. Heard a note like that of the warbling vireo from a bird in Cheney's elm which I think must be a fox-colored sparrow. Should think it a vireo if it could be here now.

9 A. M. — To Lincoln, surveying for Mr. Austin.

The catkins of the hazel are now trembling in the wind and much lengthened, showing yellowish and beginning to shed pollen.

Saw and heard sing in a peach orchard my *warbling vireo* of the morning. It must be the fox-colored sparrow. It is plumper than a bluebird, tail fox-colored, a distinct spot on the breast, no bars visible on wings. Beginning with a clear, rich, deliberate note, jingling more rapidly at the end; much like the warbling vireo at the end.

I afterward heard a fine concert of little songsters along the edge of the meadow. Approached and watched and listened for more than half an hour. There were many little sparrows, difficult to detect, flitting and hopping along and scratching the ground like hens, under the alders, willows, and cornels in a wet leafy place, occasionally alighting on a low twig and preening themselves. They had bright-bay crowns, two rather indistinct white bars on wings, an ashy breast and dark tail. These twittered sweetly, some parts very much like a canary and many together, making it the fullest and sweetest I have heard yet, — like a

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shopful of canaries. The blackbirds may make more noise. About the size of a song sparrow. I think these are the tree sparrow. Also, mixed with them, and puzzling me to distinguish for a long time, were many of the fox-colored (?) sparrows mentioned above, with a creamy cinnamon-tinged ashy breast, cinnamon shoulderlet, ashy about side head and throat, a fox-colored tail; a size larger than the others; the spot on breast very marked. Were evidently two birds intimately mixed. Did not Peabody confound them when he mentioned the mark on the breast of the tree sparrow? The rich strain of the fox-colored sparrow, as I think it is, added much to the quire. The latter solos, the former in concert. I kept off a hawk by my presence. These were for a long time invisible to me, except when they flitted past.

Heard the jingle of the rush sparrow.

A range-pole on the side of Mt. Tabor, twenty-odd feet long and ten or twelve from the ground, slanted upward on three forked posts like a rafter, a bower being opposite the lower end two rods off, and this end of the pole full of shot.

Mt. Tabor. — When the air is a little hazy, the mountains are particularly dark blue. It is affecting to see a distant mountain-top, like the summits of Uncannunuc, well seen from this hill, whereon you camped for a night in your youth, which you have never revisited, still as blue and ethereal to your eyes as is your memory of it. It lies like an isle in the far heavens, a part of earth unprophaned, which does not bear a price in the market, is not advertised by the real estate broker.

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There is another fire in the horizon, and there was one also yesterday on the side of this hill. What is that forward weed, its narrow green leaves floating at end of a long stem, in springs for cattle south side this hill, somewhat potamogeton-like? [1]

Brown has these birds set up which I may wish to examine: —

Turtle-dove, green heron, *Ardea Herodias*, pileated woodpecker, fox-colored sparrow, young of purple finch, white-eyed vireo, goldfinch, brown creeper, scarlet tanager (male and female), white-breasted nuthatch, solitary vireo, red-eyed vireo, yellow redpoll warbler, hermit thrush (killed here), cardinal grosbeak, pine grosbeak, black-billed cuckoo, mockingbird, woodcock, *Totanus flavipes* (or small yellow-leg), (great ditto?), Bartram's tatler (or upland plover), golden ditto, *Falco sparverius*, sharp-shinned or slate-colored hawk, or *F. Pennsylvanicus* of Wilson, green-winged teal, blue-winged teal, wood duck (young drakes).

[1] *Callitriche verna. Vide* May 2d.

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II

APRIL, 1853

(ÆT. 35)

April 1. Of the small and ambiguous sparrow family, methinks I have seen only the song sparrow, that one with white feathers in tail seen March 23d, the tree sparrow; and heard the field or rush sparrow. I have for some time noticed the large yellow lily roots. Thus far we have had very little if any freshet this year, — none since spring came in, I believe. The river has been going down a month, at least.

P. M. — To Dugan's.

The three spots on breast of the song sparrow seem to mark a difference of sex. At least, the three-spotted is the one I oftenest hear sing of late. The accompanying one is lighter beneath and one-spotted. One of the former by J. P. Brown's meadow-side, selecting the top of a bush, after lurking and feeding under the alders, sang *olit olit olit*| (faster) *chip chip chip che char*| (fast) *che wiss wiss wiss.*[1] The last bar was much varied, and sometimes one *olit* omitted in the first. This, I have no doubt, is my bird of March 18th. Another three-spotted sang *vit chit chit char*| *weeter char*| *tee chu.*

Saw ten black ducks at Clamshell. Had already started two, who probably occupied an outpost. They

[1] [*Walden*, p. 343; Riv. 480.]

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all went off with a loud and disagreeable quacking like ducks in a poultry-yard, their wings appearing lighter beneath.

It has rained all night and this forenoon, and now begins to clear up. The rain rests on the downy leaves of the young mulleins in separate, irregular drops, from their irregularity and color looking like ice. The drops quite in the cup of the mullein have a peculiar translucent silveriness, apparently because, being upheld by the wool, it reflects the light which would otherwise be absorbed, as if cased in light. The fresh mullein leaves are pushing up amid the brown unsightly wreck of last fall, which strews the ground like old clothes, — these the new patches.

The gooseberry in Brown's pasture shows no green yet, though ours in the garden does. The former is on the north side of a hill. Many blackbirds in concert, like leaves on the trees. The hazel stigmas now more *fully* out, curving over and a third of an inch long, that the catkins begin to shed pollen. In a skunk's probing, several dead and bruised small black crickets with a brassy tinge or reflection.

That early willow by Miles's (which I have little doubt is Gray's *Salix eriocephala* [1]) has been injured by the rain. The drops rest on the catkins as on the mullein. Though this began to open only day before yesterday and was the earliest I could find, already I hear the well-known hum of a honey-bee, and one alights on it (also a fly or two), loads himself, circles round with a loud humming and is off. Where the first wil-

[1] [Two interrogation-points in pencil here.]

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low catkin opens, there will be found the honey-bee also with it. He found this out as soon as I. The stamens have burst out on the side toward the top, like a sheaf of spears thrust forth to encounter the sun, so many spears as the garrison can spare, advanced into the spring. With this flower, so much more flower-like or noticeable than any yet, begins a new era in the flower season.

The early sedge is very fit to be the earliest grass that flowers here, appearing in the midst of dry tufts more than half hay.

Heard, I have very little doubt, the strain of my seringo[1] in the midst of the strain of a song sparrow, I believe with three spots.

Starlight by river up Assabet.

Now, at early starlight, I hear the snipe's hovering note as he circles over Nawshawtuct Meadow. Only once did I seem to see him; occasionally his squeak. He is now heard near, now farther, but is sure to circle round again. It sounds very much like a winnowing-machine increasing rapidly in intensity for a few seconds.

There will be no moon till toward morning. A slight mist is rising from the surface of the water. Hear what I should not hesitate to call the squeak of the nighthawk, — only Wilson makes them arrive early in May, — also over the meadow. Can it be the snipe? It is a little fainter than the nighthawk, perhaps, but it is further off.[2]

[1] [Two interrogation-points in pencil here.]

[2] It may be the squeak of the snipe mentioned by Nuttall. May be woodcock.

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Without a mist the river appears indefinitely wide. Looking westward, the water, still reflecting the twilight, appears elevated, and the shore-line, being invisible, lost against the distant highland, is referred toward the highland against which it is seen, for the slope of the hill and the expanse of the meadow cannot be appreciated, appearing only edgewise as height. We therefore make the water, which extends but a rod or two, wash the base of hills a quarter of a mile distant. There are but three elements in the landscape now, — the star-studded sky, the water, reflecting the stars and the lingering daylight, and the dark but comparatively narrow land between. At first there was no fog.

Hear ducks, disturbed, make a quacking or loud croaking. Now, at night, the scent of muskrats is very strong in particular localities. Next to the skunk it is perceived further than that of any of our animals that I think of. I perceive no difference between this and the musk with which ladies scent themselves, though here I pronounce it a strong, rank odor. In the faint reflected twilight, I distinguish one rapidly swimming away from me, leaving a widening ripple behind, and now hear one plunge from some willow or rock. A faint croaking from over the meadow up the Assabet, exactly like frogs. Can it be ducks? They stop when I walk toward them. How happens it that I never found them on the water when spearing? Now and then, when I pass an opening in the trees which line the shore, I am startled by the reflection of some brighter star from a bay.

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Ascend Nawshawtuct. See a fire in horizon toward Boston. The first spearer's fire I have noticed is floating along the meadow-side in the south. The mist is now all gone. The baying of dogs is borne to me with great loudness down the river. We still have the wolf in the village.

April 2. 5.30 A. M. — Down railroad.

Ground white with frost and slippery. Thin ice formed over pools. The beaked hazel pistillate blossoms (*i. e.* by Walden road). Do not find its flower described. Are not its catkins distinct from the common in not being stalked? The tree sparrows and a few blue snowbirds in company sing (the former) very sweetly in the garden this morning. I now see a faint spot on the breast. It says something like *a twee twee, chit chit, chit chit chee var-r.* Notice still plenty of sumach berries, *Juniperus repens* (those in shade green, in light turning purplish), green-briar, and a few barberries, etc., etc.

The farmers are trembling for their poultry nowadays. I heard the scream of hens, and a tumult among their mistresses (at Dugan's), calling them and scaring away the hawk, yesterday. They say they do not lose by hawks in midsummer. White quotes Linnæus as saying of hawks, "Paciscuntur inducias cum avibus, quamdiu cuculus cuculat," but White doubts it.

"'Beetles, flies, worms, form part of the lion and tiger's food, as they do that of the fox.' See Jarrold's Dissert. on Man." [1] (Mitford, Note to White's "Selborne.")

[1] [*Dissertations on Man*, London, 1806, p. 232. Mitford's quotation, if it is from Jarrold, is inexact.]

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Found twenty or thirty of the little brown nuts of the skunk-cabbage deposited on a shelf of the turf under an apple tree by E. Hubbard's close, as I have done before. What animal uses them?

The song sparrows, the three-spotted, away by the meadow-sides, are very shy and cunning: instead of flying will frequently trot along the ground under the bushes, or dodge through a wall like a swallow; and I have observed that they generally bring some object, as a rail or branch, between themselves and the face of the walker, — often with outstretched necks will peep at him anxiously for five or ten minutes.

P. M. — To Second Division Brook.

The rain cleared away yesterday afternoon, and to-day that haziness is all gone, and the air is remarkably clear. I can see houses with distinct and sharp outlines at a great distance, though there is a little seething shimmer in the air. Especially I can see far into the pine woods to tree behind tree and one tower behind another of silvery needles, stage above stage, relieved with shade. The edge of the wood is not a plane surface, but has depth. Was that *Rana fontinalis* or *pipiens* in the pool by E. Wood's railroad crossing? The first large frog I have seen. C. says a wasp lit on him.

A wood tortoise by river above Derby's Bridge; extreme length of shell seven and three eighths inches, extreme breadth five inches across the back part, fore part about one half inch less, and a trifle less still in middle. The orange-color of its inner parts. It was

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sluggish, lean, and I judged old from the shell being worn beneath and it not resisting much when I drew out its claws; unlike [in] these respects to one I after found. Irides golden. A singularly flat and broad head with a beak slanting backward much like a snake's head. There were some hundreds of small dark-colored leeches in masses in the chink over his tail and under his hind quarters, a kind of vermin they are much infested by. The same was the case with second one.

Heard and saw what I call the pine warbler, — *vetter vetter vetter vetter vet*, — the cool woodland sound. The first this year of the higher-colored birds, after the bluebird and the blackbird's wing; is it not? It so affects me as something more tender. Together with the driftwood on the shore of the Assabet and the sawdust from Heywood's mill, I pick up teasel-heads from the factory with the wool still in them. How many tales the stream tells! The poplars by the railroad and near Harrington's, male aspens, begin to-day. A turtle dove. It sailed like a hawk. Heard the hooting owl in Ministerial Swamp. It sounded somewhat like the hounding or howling of some dogs, and as often as the whistle of the engine sounded, I noticed a resemblance in the tone. A singular kind of squealing introduced into its note. See the larger red-and-black-abdomen ants at work. See the fine moss in the pastures with beautiful red stems even crimsoning the ground. This is its season. The amelanchier buds look more forward than those of any shrub I notice. The cowslip at Second Division

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shows the yellow in its bud; will blossom in four or five days. I see the skins of many caddis-worms in the water there. Have not the ephemeræ already flown? Again I notice the sort of small green ova in the water there like frog's ova, on the weeds and even on the shells of the snails. The stem, so to speak, of a cocoon, — though it inclosed the leaf-stem of the plant (a viburnum) it was on, and so put on the guise of the leaf, — was still so strongly fastened about the main stem that I broke the latter in getting it off. Cheney's elm blossomed to-day. Many others scarcely a day behind it.

We cannot well afford not to see the geese go over a single spring, and so commence our year regularly.

Observed the first female willow just coming out, apparently *Salix eriocephala*, just beyond woods by Abel Hosmer's field by railroad. Apparently the female willows, as well as white maples and poplars, are a few days later than the males. The swollen red maple buds now conspicuously tinge the tops of the trees.

Methinks some birds are earlier this year because the ground has been bare so long. Observed some plowing yesterday.

April 3. *Saturday.* Nothing is more saddening than an ineffectual and proud intercourse with those of whom we expect sympathy and encouragement. I repeatedly find myself drawn toward certain persons but to be disappointed. No concessions which are not radical are the least satisfaction. By myself I can live and

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thrive, but in the society of incompatible friends I starve. To cultivate their society is to cherish a sore which can only be healed by abandoning them. I cannot trust my neighbors whom I know any more than I can trust the law of gravitation and jump off the Cliffs.

The last two *Tribunes* I have not looked at. I have no time to read newspapers. If you chance to live and move and have your being in that thin stratum in which the events which make the news transpire, — thinner than the paper on which it is printed, — then these things will fill the world for you; but if you soar above or dive below that plane, you cannot remember nor be reminded of them.[1]

No fields are so barren to me as the men of whom I expect everything but get nothing. In their neighborhood I experience a painful yearning for society, which cannot be satisfied, for the hate is greater than the love.

P. M. — To Cliffs.

At Hayden's I hear hylas on two keys or notes. Heard one after the other, it might be mistaken for the varied note of one. The little croakers, too, are very lively there. I get close to them and witness a great commotion and half hopping, half swimming, about, with their heads out, apparently in pursuit of each other, — perhaps thirty or forty within a few square yards and fifteen or twenty within one yard. There is not only the incessant lively croaking of many

[1] [*Cape Cod, and Miscellanies*, p. 472; *Misc.*, Riv. 275.]

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together, as usually heard, but a lower, hoarser, squirming, screwing kind of croak, perhaps from the other sex. As I approach nearer, they disperse and bury themselves in the grass at the bottom; only one or two remain outstretched on the surface, and, at another step, these, too, conceal themselves.

Looking up the river yesterday, in a direction opposite to the sun, not long before it set, the water was of a rich, dark blue — while looking at it in a direction diagonal to this, *i. e.* northeast, it was nearly slate-colored.

To my great surprise the saxifrage is in bloom. It was, as it were, by mere accident that I found it. I had not observed any particular forwardness in it, when, happening to look under a projecting rock in a little nook on the south side of a stump, I spied one little plant which had opened three or four blossoms high up the Cliff. Evidently you must look very sharp and faithfully to find the first flower, such is the advantage of position, and when you have postponed a flower for a week and are turning away, a little further search may reveal it. Some flowers, perhaps, have advantages one year which they have not the next. This spring, as well as the past winter, has been remarkably free from snow, and this reason, and the plant being hardy withal, may account for its early blossoming. With what skill it secures moisture and heat, growing commonly in a little bed of moss which keeps it moist, and lying low in some cleft of the rock! The sunniest and most sheltered exposures possible it secures. This faced the southeast, was nearly a foot under the eaves of the rock,

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had not raised its little strawberry-like cluster of buds in the least above the level of its projecting, calyx-like leaves. It was shelter within shelter. The blasts sweep over it. Ready to shoot upward when it shall be warm. The leaves of those which have been more exposed are turned red. It is a very pretty, snug plant with its notched leaves, one of the neatest and prettiest leaves seen now.

A blackberry vine which lay over the rock was beginning to leave out, as much or more than the gooseberry in the garden, such was the reflected heat. The Missouri currant is perhaps more advanced than the early gooseberry in our garden. The female *Populus tremuliformis* catkins, narrower and at present more red and somewhat less downy than the male, west side of railroad at Deep Cut, quite as forward as the male in this situation. The male *P. grandidentata's* a little further west are nearly out.

I should have noticed the fact that the pistillate flower of the hazel peeps forth gradually.[1]

April 4. Last night, a sugaring of snow, which goes off in an hour or two in the rain. Rains all day. The steam-cloud from the engine rises but slowly in such an atmosphere, and makes a small angle with the earth. It is low, perhaps, for the same reason that the clouds are. The robins sang this morning, nevertheless, and now more than ever hop about boldly in the garden in the rain, with full, broad, light cow-colored breasts.

[1] *Vide* [p. 92].

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P. M. — Rain, rain. To Clematis Brook *via* Lee's Bridge.

Again I notice that early reddish or purplish grass that lies flat on the pools, like a warm blush suffusing the youthful face of the year. A warm, dripping rain, heard on one's umbrella as on a snug roof, and on the leaves without, suggests comfort. We go abroad with a slow but sure contentment, like turtles under their shells. We never feel so comfortable as when we are abroad in a storm with satisfaction. Our comfort is positive then. We are all compact, and our thoughts collected. We walk under the clouds and mists as under a roof. Now we seem to hear the ground a-soaking up the rain, and not falling [*sic*] ineffectually on a frozen surface. We, too, are penetrated and revived by it. Robins still sing, and song sparrows more or less, and blackbirds, and the unfailing jay screams. How the thirsty grass rejoices! It has pushed up so visibly since morning, and fields that were completely russet yesterday are already tinged with green. We rejoice with the grass.

I hear the hollow sound of drops falling into the water under Hubbard's Bridge, and each one makes a conspicuous bubble which is floated down-stream. Instead of ripples there are a myriad dimples on the stream. The lichens remember the sea to-day. The usually dry cladonias, which are so crisp under the feet, are full of moist vigor. The rocks speak and tell the tales inscribed on them. Their inscriptions are brought out. I pause to study their geography.

At Conantum End I saw a red-tailed hawk launch

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himself away from an oak by the pond at my approach, — a heavy flier, flapping even like the great bittern at first, — heavy forward. After turning Lee's Cliff I heard, methinks, more birds singing even than in fair weather, — tree sparrows, whose song has the character of the canary's, *F. hyemalis's, chill-lill,* the sweet strain of the fox-colored sparrow, song sparrows, a nuthatch, jays, crows, bluebirds, robins, and a large congregation of blackbirds. They suddenly alight with great din in a stubble-field just over the wall, not perceiving me and my umbrella behind the pitch pines, and there feed silently; then, getting uneasy or anxious, they fly up on to an apple tree, where being reassured, commences a rich but deafening concert, *o-gurgle-ee-e, o-gurgle-ee-e,* some of the most liquid notes ever heard, as if produced by some of the water of the Pierian spring, flowing through some kind of musical water-pipe and at the same time setting in motion a multitude of fine vibrating metallic springs. Like a shepherd merely meditating most enrapturing glees on such a water-pipe. A more liquid bagpipe or clarionet, immersed like bubbles in a thousand sprayey notes, the bubbles half lost in the spray. When I show myself, away they go with a loud harsh *charr-r, charr-r.* At first I had heard an inundation of blackbirds approaching, some beating time with a loud *chuck, chuck,* while the rest played a hurried, gurgling fugue.

Saw a sucker washed to the shore at Lee's Bridge, its tail gone, large fins standing out, purplish on top of head and snout. Reminds me of spring, spearing, and gulls.

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A rainy day is to the walker in solitude and retirement like the night. Few travellers are about, and they half hidden under umbrellas and confined to the highways. One's thoughts run in a different channel from usual. It is somewhat like the dark day; it is a light night.

How cheerful the roar of a brook swollen by the rain, especially if there is no sound of a mill in it!

A woodcock went off from the shore of Clematis or Nightshade Pond with a few slight rapid sounds like a watchman's rattle half revolved.

A clustering of small narrow leaves somewhat cone-like on the shrub oak. Some late, low, remarkably upright alders (*serrulata*), short thick catkins, at Clematis Brook. The hazel bloom is about one tenth of an inch long (the stigmas) now. A little willow (*Salix Muhlenbergiana?*) nearly ready to bloom, not larger than a sage willow.

All *our* early willows with catkins appearing before the leaves must belong to the group of "The Sallows. Cinereæ. Borrer," and that of the "Two-colored Willows. Discolores. Borrer," as adopted by Barratt; or, in other words, to the first § of Carey in Gray.

The other day, when I had been standing perfectly still some ten minutes, looking at a willow which had just blossomed, some rods in the rear of Martial Miles's house, I felt eyes on my back and, turning round suddenly, saw the heads of two men who had stolen out of the house and were watching me over a rising ground as fixedly as I the willow. They were study-

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ing man, which is said to be the proper study of mankind, I nature, and yet, when detected, they felt the cheapest of the two.

I hear the twitter of tree sparrows from fences and shrubs in the yard and from alders by meadows and the riverside every day.

April 5. The bluebird comes to us bright in his vernal dress as a bridegroom. (Cleared up at noon, making a day and a half of rain.) Has he not got new feathers then? Brooks says "the greater number of birds renew their plumage in autumn only;" if they have two moults, spring and autumn, there is still but one of the wings and tail feathers. Also says that in the spring various "birds undergo a change of color unaccompanied by any moult."

I have noticed the few phœbes, not to mention other birds, mostly near the river. Is it not because of the greater abundance of insects there, those early moths or ephemeræ? As these and other birds are most numerous there, the red-tailed hawk is there to catch them?

April 6. 6 A. M. — To Cliffs.

The robin is the singer at present, such is its power and universality, being found both in garden and wood. Morning and evening it does not fail, perched on some elm or the like, and in rainy days it is one long morning or evening. The song sparrow is still more universal but not so powerful. The lark, too, is equally constant, morning and evening, but con-

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fined to certain localities, as is the blackbird to some extent. The bluebird, with feebler but not less sweet warbling, helps fill the air, and the phœbe does her part. The tree sparrow, *F. hyemalis*, and fox-colored sparrows make the meadow-sides or gardens where they are flitting vocal, the first with its canary-like twittering, the second with its lively ringing trills or jingle. The third is a very sweet and more powerful singer, which would be memorable if we heard him long enough. The woodpecker's tapping, though not musical, suggests pleasant associations in the cool morning, — is inspiriting, enlivening.

I hear no hylas nor croakers in the morning. Is it too cool for them? The gray branches of the oaks, which have lost still more of their leaves, seen against the pines when the sun is rising and falling on them, how rich and interesting!

From Cliffs see on the still water under the hill, at the outlet of the pond, two ducks sailing, partly white. Hear the faint, swelling, far-off beat of a partridge.

Saw probably female red-wings (?), grayish or dark ashy-brown, on an oak in the woods, with a male (?) whose red shoulder did not appear.

How many walks along the brooks I take in the spring! What shall I call them? Lesser riparial excursions? Prairial? rivular?[1]

When I came out there was not a speck of mist in the sky, but the morning without a cloud is not the fairest. Now, 8.30 A. M., it rains. Such is April.

[1] [Channing, p. 97.]

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A male willow, apparently same with that at H.'s Bridge, or No. 2, near end of second track on west. Another male by ring-post on east side, long cylindrical catkins, now dark with scales, which are generally more rounded than usual and reddish at base and not lanceolate, turning backwards in blossom and exposing their sides or breasts to the sun, from which side burst forth fifty or seventy-five long white stamens like rays, tipped with yellow anthers which at first were reddish above, — spears to be embraced by invisible Arnold Winkelrieds; — reddish twigs and clear gray beneath. These last colors, especially, distinguish it from Nos. 1 and 2. Also a female, four or five rods north of last, just coming into bloom, with very narrow tapering catkins, lengthening already, some to an inch and a half, ovaries conspicuously stalked; very downy twigs, more reddish and rough than last below.

If we consider the eagle as a large hawk, how he falls in our estimation!

Our new citizen Sam Wheeler has a brave new weathercock all gilt on his new barn. This morning at sunrise it reflected the sun so brightly that I thought it was a house on fire in Acton, though I saw no smoke, but that might well be omitted.

The flower-buds of the red maple have very red inner scales, now being more and more exposed, which color the tree-tops a great distance off.

P. M. — To Second Division Brook.

Near Clamshell Hill, I scare up in succession four pairs of good-sized brown or grayish-brown ducks.

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They go off with a loud squeaking quack. Each pair is by itself. One pair on shore some rods from the water. Is not the object of the quacking to give notice of danger to the rest who cannot see it?

All along under the south side of this hill on the edge of the meadow, the air resounds with the hum of honey-bees, attracted by the flower of the skunk-cabbage. I first heard the fine, peculiarly sharp hum of the honey-bee before I thought of them. Some hummed hollowly within the spathes, perchance to give notice to their fellows that plant was occupied, for they repeatedly looked in, and backed out on finding another. It was surprising to see them, directed by their instincts to these localities, while the earth has still but a wintry aspect so far as vegetation is concerned, buzz around some obscure spathe close to the ground, well knowing what they were about, then alight and enter. As the cabbages were very numerous for thirty or forty rods, there must have been some hundreds of bees there at once, at least. I watched many when they entered and came out, and they all had little yellow pellets of pollen at their thighs. As the skunk-cabbage comes out before the willow, it is probable that the former is the first flower they visit. It is the more surprising, as the flower is for the most part invisible within the spathe. Some of these spathes are now quite large and twisted up like cows' horns, not curved over as usual. Commonly they make a pretty little crypt or shrine for the flower, like the overlapping door of a tent. It must be bee-bread (?), then, they are after. Lucky

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that this flower does not flavor their honey. I have noticed for a month or more the bare ground sprinkled here and there with several kinds of fungi, now conspicuous, — the starred kind, puffballs, etc. Now it is fair, and the sun shines, though it shines and rains with short intervals to-day. I do not see so much greenness in the grass as I expected, though a considerable change. No doubt the rain exaggerates a little by showing all the greenness there is! The thistle is now ready to wear the rain-drops.

I see, in J. P. Brown's field, by Nut Meadow Brook, where a hen has been devoured by a hawk probably. The feathers whiten the ground. They cannot carry a large fowl very far from the farmyard, and when driven off are frequently baited and caught in a trap by the remainder of their quarry. The gooseberry has not yet started. I cannot describe the lark's song. I used these syllables in the morning to remember it by, — *heetar-su-e-oo*. The willow in Miles's Swamp which resembles No. 2 not fairly in blossom yet. Heard unusual notes from, I think, a chickadee in the swamp, elicited, probably, by the love season, — *che che vet*, accent on last syllable, and *vissa viss a viss*, the last sharp and fine. Yet the bird looked more slender than the common titmouse, with a longer tail, which jerked a little, but it seemed to be the same bird that sang *phebe* and *he-phebe* so sweetly. The woods rang with this. Nuttall says it is the young that *phebe* in winter. I noticed some aspens (*tremuliformis*) of good size there, which have no flowers!

The first lightning I remember this year was in the

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rain last evening, quite bright; and the thunder followed very long after. A thunder-shower in Boston yesterday.

One cowslip, though it shows the yellow, is not *fairly* out, but will be by to-morrow. How they improve their time! Not a moment of sunshine lost. One thing I may depend on: there has been no idling with the flowers. They advance as steadily as a clock. Nature loses not a moment, takes no vacation. These plants, now protected by the water, just peeping forth. I should not be surprised to find that they drew in their heads in a frosty night. Returning by Harrington's, saw a pigeon woodpecker flash away, showing the rich golden under side of its glancing wings and the large whitish spot on its back, and presently I heard its familiar long-repeated loud note, almost familiar as that of a barn-door fowl, which it somewhat resembles. The robins, too, now toward sunset, perched on the old apple trees in Tarbell's orchard, twirl forth their evening lays unweariedly. Is that a willow, the low bush from the fireplace ravine which from the lichen oak, fifty or sixty rods distant, shows so red in the westering sunlight? More red, I find, by far than close at hand.

To-night for the first time I hear the hylas in full blast.

Is that pretty little reddish-leaved star-shaped plant by the edge of water a different species of hypericum from the *perforatum?*

April 7. 6 A. M. — I did not notice any bees on the willows I looked at yesterday, though so many on the cabbage.

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The white-bellied swallows advertise themselves this morning, dashing up the street, and two have already come to disturb the bluebirds at our box. Saw and heard this morning, on a small elm and the wall by Badger's, a sparrow (?), seemingly somewhat slaty-brown and lighter beneath, whose note began loud and clear, *twee-tooai*, etc., etc., ending much like the field sparrow. Was it a female *F. hyemalis?* Or a field, or a swamp, sparrow? Saw no white in tail. Also saw a small, plain, warbler-like bird for a moment, which I did not recognize.

10 A. M. — Down river in boat to Bedford, with C. A windy, but clear, sunny day; cold wind from northwest. Notice a white maple with almost all the staminate flowers above or on the top, most of the stamens now withered, before the red maple has blossomed. Another maple, all or nearly all female. The staminiferous flowers look light yellowish, the female dark crimson. These white maples' lower branches droop quite low, striking the head of the rower, and curve gracefully upward at the ends. Another sucker, the counterpart of the one I saw the other day, tail gone, but not purpled snout, being fresher. Is it the work of a gull or of the spearer? Do not the suckers chiefly attract the gulls at this season?

River has risen from last rains, and we cross the Great Meadows, scaring up many ducks at a great distance, some partly white, some apparently black, some brownish (?). It is Fast-Day, and many gunners are about the shore, which makes them shy.

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I never cross the meadow at this season without seeing ducks. That is probably a marsh hawk, flying low over the water and then skirting the meadow's copsy edge, when abreast, from its apparently triangular wings, reminding me of a smaller gull. Saw more afterward. A hawk above Ball's Hill which, though with a distinct white rump, I think was not the harrier but sharp-shinned, from its broadish, mothlike form, light and slightly spotted beneath, with head bent downward, watching for prey. A great gull, though it is so fair and the wind northwest, fishing over the flooded meadow. He slowly circles round and hovers with flapping wings in the air over particular spots, repeatedly returning there and sailing quite low over the water, with long, narrow, pointed wings, trembling throughout their length. Hawks much about water at this season.

If you make the least correct observation of nature this year, you will have occasion to repeat it with illustrations the next, and the season and life itself is prolonged.

I am surprised to see how much in warm places the high blueberry buds are started, some reddish, some greenish, earlier now than any gooseberries I have noticed. Several painted tortoises; no doubt have been out a long time.

Walk in and about Tarbell's Swamp. Heard in two distinct places a slight, more prolonged croak, somewhat like the toad. This? Or a frog? It is a *warmer* sound than I have heard yet, as if dreaming outdoors were possible.

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Many spotted tortoises are basking amid the dry leaves in the sun, along the side of a still, warm ditch cut through the swamp. They make a great rustling a rod ahead, as they make haste through the leaves to tumble into the water. The flower-buds of the andromeda here are ready to open, almost. Yet three or four rods off from all this, on the edge of the swamp, under a north hillside, is a long strip of ice five inches thick for ten or twelve rods. The first striped snake crawling off through leaves in the sun.

Crossed to Bedford side to see where [they] had been digging out (probably) a woodchuck. How handsome the river from those hills! The river southwest over the Great Meadows a sheet of sparkling molten silver, with broad lagoons parted from it by curving lines of low bushes; to the right or northward now, at 2 or 3 P. M., a dark blue, with small smooth, light edgings, firm plating, under the lee of the shore. Fly-like bees buzzing about, close to the dry, barren hillside.

The only large catkins I notice along the river-side are on the recent yellow-green shoots from the stump of what looks like the ordinary early swamp willow, which is common, — near by almost wholly grayish and stinted and scarcely opening yet. Small bee-like wasps (?) and flies are numerous on them, not flying when you stand never so close. A large leech in the water, serpentine this wise, as the snake is not. Approach near to Simon Brown's ducks, on river. They are continually bobbing their heads under water in a shallow part of the meadow,

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more under water than above. I infer that the wild employ themselves likewise. You are most struck with the apparent ease with which they glide away, — not seeing the motion of their feet, — as by their wills.

As we stand on Nawshawtuct at 5 P. M., looking over the meadows, I doubt if there is a town more adorned by its river than ours. Now the sun is low in the west, the northeasterly water is of a peculiarly ethereal light blue, more beautiful than the sky, and this broad water with innumerable bays and inlets running up into the land on either side and often divided by bridges and causeways, as if it were the very essence and richness of the heavens distilled and poured over the earth, contrasting with the clear russet land and the paler sky from which it has been subtracted, — nothing can be more elysian. Is not the blue more ethereal when the sun is at this angle? The river is but a long chain of flooded meadows. I think our most distant extensive low horizon must be that northeast from this hill over Ball's Hill, — to what town is it? It is down the river valley, partly at least toward the Merrimack, as it should be.

What is that plant with a whorl of four, five, or six reddish cornel-like leaves, seven or eight inches from the ground, with the minute relics of small dried flowers left, and a large pink (?) bud now springing, just beneath the leaves?[1] It is a true evergreen, for it dries soon in the house, as if kept fresh by the root.

[1] Large cornel (*Canadensis*).

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April 8. 6 A. M. — To Abel Hosmer's ring-post.

The ground sprinkled, salted, with little snowlike pellets one tenth of an inch in diameter, from half an inch to one inch apart, sometimes cohering starwise together. As if it had spit so much snow only. I think it one form of frost merely, or frozen dew. Noticed the like a week or two ago. It was gone in half an hour, when I came back. What is the peculiar state of the atmosphere that determines these things? The spearer's light last night shone into my chamber on the wall and awakened me.

Saw and heard my small pine warbler shaking out his trills, or jingle, even like money coming to its bearings. They appear much the smaller from perching high in the tops of white pines and flitting from tree to tree at that height.

Is not my night-warbler the white-eyed vireo? — not yet here. Heard the field sparrow again.

The male *Populus grandidentata* appears to open very gradually, beginning sooner than I supposed. It shows some of its red anthers long before it opens. There is a female on the left, on Warren's Path at Deep Cut.

Is not the pollen of the *P. tremuliformis* like rye meal? Are not female flowers of more sober and modest colors, as the willows for instance? The hylas have fairly begun now.

April 9. P. M. — To Second Division.

The chipping sparrow, with its ashy-white breast and white streak over eye and undivided chestnut

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crown, holds up its head and pours forth its *che che che che che che*. On a pitch [pine] on side of J. Hosmer's river hill, a pine warbler, by ventriloquism sounding farther off than it was, which was seven or eight feet, hopping and flitting from twig to twig, apparently picking the small flies at and about the base of the needles at the extremities of the twigs. Saw two afterward on the walls by roadside.

A warm and hazy but breezy day. The sound of the laborers' striking the iron rails of the railroad with their sledges, is as in the sultry days of summer, — resounds, as it were, from the hazy sky as a roof, — a more confined and, in that sense, domestic sound echoing along between the earth and the low heavens. The same strokes would produce a very different sound in the winter. Men fishing for trout. Small light-brown lizards, about five inches long, with somewhat darker tails, and some a light line along back, are very active, wiggling off, in J. P. Brown's ditch, with pollywogs.

Beyond the desert, hear the hooting owl, which, as formerly, I at first mistook for the hounding of a dog, — a squealing *eee* followed by *hoo hoo hoo* deliberately, and particularly sonorous and ringing. This at 2 P. M. Now mated. Pay their addresses by day, says Brooks. Winkle lichens, some with greenish bases, on a small prostrate white oak, near base. Also large white ear-like ones higher up. A middling-sized orange-copper butterfly on the mill road, at the clearing, with deeply scalloped leaves [*sic*]. You see the buff-edged and this, etc., in warm, sunny southern exposures on the edge of woods or sides of rocky hills and cliffs, above dry

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leaves and twigs, where the wood has been lately cut and there are many dry leaves and twigs about. An ant-hill covered with a firm sward except at top. The cowslips are well out, — the first conspicuous herbaceous flower, for the cabbage is concealed in its spathe.

The *Populus tremuliformis*, just beyond, *resound* with the hum of honey-bees, flies, etc. These male trees are frequently at a great distance from the females. Do not the bees and flies alone carry the pollen to the latter? I did not know at first whence the humming of bees proceeded. At this comparatively still season, before the crickets begin, the hum of bees is a very noticeable sound, and the least hum or buzz that fills the void is detected. Here appear to be more bees than on the willows. On the last, where I can see them better, are not only bees with pellets of pollen, but more flies, small bees, and a lady-bug. What do flies get here on male flowers, if not nectar? Bees also in the female willows, of course without pellets. It must be nectar alone there. That willow by H.'s Bridge is very brittle at base of stem, but hard to break above. The more I study willows, the more I am confused. The epigæa will not be out for some days.

Elm blossoms now in prime. Their tops heavier against the sky, a rich brown; their outlines further seen. Most alders done. Some small upright ones still fresh.

Evening. — Hear the snipe a short time at early starlight.

I hear this evening for the first time, from the partially flooded meadow across the river, I standing on this side,

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at early starlight, a general faint, prolonged stuttering or stertorous croak, — probably same with that heard April 7th, — that kind of growling, like wild beasts or a coffee-mill, which you can produce in your throat. It seems too dry and wooden, not sonorous or pleasing enough, for the toad. I hear occasionally the bullfrog's note, croakingly and hoarsely but faintly imitated, in the midst of it, — which makes me think it may be they, though I have not seen any frogs so large yet, but that one by the railroad which I suspect may have been a *fontinalis*. What sound do the tortoises make beside hissing? There were the mutilated *Rana palustris* seen in the winter, the hylodes, the small or middling-sized croakers in pools (a shorter, less stuttering note than this to-night), and next the note of the 7th, and to-night the last, the first I have heard from the river. I occasionally see a little frog jump into a brook.

The whole meadow resounds, probably from one end of the river to the other, this evening, with this faint, stertorous breathing. It is the waking up of the meadows. Louder than all is heard the shrill peep of the hylodes and the hovering note of the snipe, circling invisible above them all.

Vide again in Howitt, pp. 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 37, 49, 54, 95.

Is it the red-eye or white-eye whose pensile nest is so common?

April 10 (?). P. M. — To Cliffs.

A cold and windy day. Our earliest gooseberry is pretty green; next, probably the Mississippi [*sic*] cur-

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rant, which is beginning to look green; next, the large buds of the lilac are opening; and next, our second or later gooseberry appears to be just beginning to expand or to show its green, and this appears to be the same with the wild one by J. P. Brown's. The male red maple buds now show eight or ten (ten counting everything) scales, alternately crosswise, and the pairs successively brighter red or scarlet, which will account for the gradual reddening of their tops. They are about ready to open.

From Fair Haven I see, in the northwestern and northern horizon and pretty high, the light reflected from falling rain, sleet, or hail, or all together, — a certain glow, almost sunny light, from the upright or nearly upright, but always straight, sides of clouds, defined by the falling rain or hail, — for hail and rain fell on me within an hour or two. The northern Peterboro Hill is concealed by a driving storm, while the southern one is distinct.

A small black dor-bug dead in the wood-path.

Two crowfoots out on the Cliff. A very warm and dry exposure, but no further sheltered were they. Pale-yellow offering of spring. The saxifrage is beginning to be abundant, elevating its flowers somewhat, pure, trustful, white, amid its pretty notched and reddish cup of leaves. The white saxifrage is a response from earth to the increased light of the year; the yellow crowfoot, to the increased heat of the sun. The buds of the thorn bushes are conspicuous. The chrysosplenium is open, a few of them, in Hubbard's meadow. I thought he had destroyed them all.

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When the farmer cleans out his ditches, I mourn the loss of many a flower which he calls a weed. The main *charm* about the Corner road, just beyond the bridge, to me, has been in the little grove of locusts, sallows, and birches, etc., which has sprung up on the bank as you rise the hill. Yesterday I saw a man who is building a house near by cutting them down. I asked him if he was going to cut them all. He said he was. I said if I were in his place I would not have cut them for a hundred dollars, that they were the chief attraction of the place. "Why," said he, "they are nothing but a parcel of prickly bushes and are not worth anything. I 'm going to build a new wall here." And so, to ornament the approach to his house, he substitutes a bare, ugly wall for an interesting grove.

I still feel the frost in the meadows firm under my feet.

Saw a pretty large narrow-winged hawk with a white rump and white spots or bars on under (?) side of wings. Probably the female or young of a marsh hawk. What was that smaller, broader-winged hawk with *white* rump of April 7th? For, after all, I do not find it described.

The sweet-gale will blossom very soon.

April 11. I hear the clear, loud whistle of a purple finch, somewhat like and nearly as loud as the robin, from the elm by Whiting's. The maple which I think is a red one, just this side of Wheildon's, is just out this morning.

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9 A. M. — To Haverhill *via* Cambridge and Boston.

Dr. Harris says that that early black-winged, buff-edged butterfly is the *Vanessa Antiopa*, and is introduced from Europe, and is sometimes found in this state alive in winter. The orange-brown one with scalloped wings, and smaller somewhat, is *Vanessa Progne*. The early pestle-shaped bug or beetle is a cicindela, of which there are three species, one of them named from a semicolon-like mark on it. *Vide* Hassley on spiders in Boston *Journal of Natural History*.

At Natural History Rooms, saw the female red-wing, striped white and ash; female cow-bird, ashy-brown.

First. The swamp sparrow is ferruginous-brown (spotted with black) and ash above about neck; brownish-white beneath; undivided chestnut crown.

Second. The grass-bird, grayish-brown, mingled with ashy-whitish above; light, pencilled with dark brown beneath; no marked crown; outer tail feathers whitish, perhaps a faint bar on wing.

Third. Field sparrow, smaller than either; marked like first, with less black, and less distinct ash on neck, and less ferruginous and no distinct crown.

Fourth. Savannah sparrow, much like second, with more black, but not noticeable white in tail, and a little more brown; no crown marked.

Emberiza miliaria Gmel. (What is it in Nuttall?) appears to be my young of purple finch.

One Maryland yellow-throat, probably female, has no black on side head, and is like a summer yellow-bird except that the latter has ends of the wings and tail black.

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The yellow-rump warbler (what is it in Nuttall?) is bluish-gray, with two white bars on wings, a bright yellow crown, side breasts, and rump. Female less distinct.

Blackburnian is orange-throated.

American redstart, male, is black forward, coppery-orange beneath and stripe on wings and near base of tail. Female dark ashy and fainter marks.

J. E. Cabot thought my small hawk might be Cooper's hawk. Says that Gould, an Englishman, is the best authority on birds.

April 13. Haverhill. — Pewee days and April showers.

First hear toads (and take off coat), a loud, ringing sound filling the air, which yet few notice. First shad caught at Haverhill to-day; first alewife 10th. Fishermen say that no fish can get above the dam at Lawrence. No shad, etc., were caught at Lowell last year. Were catching smelts with a small seine. It says in deeds that brooks shall be opened or obstructions removed by the 20th of April, on account of fish.

April 15. Mouse-ear.

April 16. Either barn or bank swallows overhead. Birds loosen and expand their feathers and look larger in the rain.

April 17. *Sunday.* The elder leaf is the most forward of any shrub or tree I have seen; more than one inch long.

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Visited two houses of refuge about one hundred and sixty years old, two miles or more east of Haverhill village, — the Peaslee houses, substantial brick houses some forty by twenty feet. Two rows of bricks project between the two stories; cavities left for the staging; marks of ovens (which projected outdoors) cut off; *white oak* timber, fifteen by twelve inches, sound; space in chimney above fireplace about three feet deep (see stars); two or three very narrow windows; large-sized bricks. These were the houses of Joseph and Nathaniel Peaslee, appointed houses of refuge by the town about 1690. The occupant of one, not a very old man, told me that his grandfather, Joseph Peaslee, was seventeen years old when the French and Indians attacked the town, killed Rolfe, etc. A Newcomb from Cape Cod lives in the other. There are as many as six garrison-houses and houses of refuge still standing in Haverhill. I have seen four still entire and one partly so, all brick.

Field sparrows common now. The Merrimack is yellow and turbid in the spring; will run clear anon. The red maple begins to show stamens here. A pleasant hilly country north of Great Pond. What were those five large gray ducks with white wing-coverts?

April 19. Haverhill. — Willow and bass strip freely. Surveying Charles White's long piece. Hear again that same nighthawk-like sound over a meadow at evening.

April 20. Saw a toad and a small snake.

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April 21. Haverhill. — A peach tree in bloom.

April 23. Haverhill. — Martins.

April 24. *Sunday.* To and around Creek Pond and back over Parsonage Hill, Haverhill.

Field horse-tail in bloom. Marsh (?) hawk, with black tips of wings. Alders about all done. Green leaves just beginning to expand. Houstonias. How affecting that, annually at this season, as surely as the sun takes a higher course in the heavens, this pure and simple little flower peeps out and spots the great globe with white in our America, its four little white or bluish petals on a slender stalk making a delicate flower about a third of an inch in diameter! What a significant, though faint, utterance of spring through the veins of earth!

I see, in a pool by the Creek Brook, pretty chains of toad-spawn in double parallel crenate or serpentine or sometimes corkscrewing lines of black ova, close together, immersed in a light-colored jelly a third of an inch in diameter, appearing as if the two strings were one, like a lace with two scalloped black borders. This is what they were singing about.

Haverhill is remarkably bare of trees and woods. The young ladies cannot tell where are the nearest woods. I saw the moon rise last night over great bare hills eastward, and it reminded me of Ossian. Saw a pretty islet in the Creek Pond on the east side covered with white pine wood, appearing from the south higher than wide and as if the trees grew out of the water. You saw the light-colored trunks six or eight feet

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beneath, and then the heavy green mass overhung the water a rod, under and beyond which you see the light surface of the pond, which gives the isle a peculiarly light and floating appearance. So much beauty does a wooded islet add to a pond. It is an object sufficiently central and *insular*. Dandelions. How surprising this bright-yellow disk! Why study other hieroglyphics? It is along the east side of this pond that the Indians are said to have taken their way with Hannah Dustin and her nurse in 1697 toward the Merrimack. I walked along it and thought how they might have been ambuscaded.

* *April 27.* Haverhill. — The warbling vireo.

Talked with a fisherman at the Burrough [*sic*], who was cracking and eating walnuts on a post before his hut. He said he got twenty cents a stick for sawing marked logs, which were mostly owned at Lowell, but trees that fell in and whatever was not marked belonged to them. Much went by in the ice and could not be got. They haul it in and tie it. He called it Little Concord where I lived. They got some small stuff which came from that river, and said he knew the ice, it was blue (it is not) and was turned over by the falls. The Lawrence dam breaks up the ice so now that it will not be so likely to jam below and produce a freshet. Said a thousand dollars' damage was done by a recent freshet to the farm just above, at the great bend. The wind blowing on to the shore ate it away, trees and all. In the greatest freshet he could remember, methinks about ten years ago, the water

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came up to his window-sill. His family took refuge on the hillside. His barn was moved and tipped over, his well filled up, and it took him, with help, a day or more to clear a passage through the ice from his door to his well. His trees were all prostrated by the ice. This was apparently between twenty and thirty feet above the present level. Says the railroad bridge hurts the fishing by stopping the ice and wearing away and deepening the channel near the north shore, where they fish, — draw their seines. Call it sixty rods wide, — their seines being thirty rods long, — and twenty-five feet deep in the middle.

Interesting to me are their habits and conversation who live along the shores of a great river. The shore, here some seventy or eighty feet high, is broken by gullies, more or less sandy, where water has flowed down, and the cottages rise not more than one sixth or one seventh the way up.

April 29. Return to Concord. At Natural History Rooms in Boston. Have I seen the least bittern? It is so brown above and yellowish, woolly, white beneath. The American goshawk is slate above, gray beneath; the young spotted dark and white beneath, and brown above. Fish hawk, white beneath. Young of marsh hawk, reddish-brown above, iron-rusty beneath. Summer duck with a crest. Dusky duck, not black, but rather dark brown. The velvet ducks I saw, hardly large enough for this. My whiter ducks may be the *Merganser castor*, or the red-breasted.

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April 30. Concord. — Cultivated cherry in bloom.

Moses Emerson, the kind and gentlemanly man who assisted and looked after me in Haverhill, said that a good horse was worth $75, and all above was fancy, and that when he saw a man driving a fast horse he expected he would fail soon.

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III

MAY, 1853

(ÆT. 35)

May 1. *Sunday.* A cold northwest wind. Now, on my return to Concord, I am struck by the increased greenness of the country, or landscape.

I find that since I left Concord, April 11th, there have blossomed here, probably nearly in the following order, these plants, including those I saw in Haverhill: dandelion, field horse-tail, *Antennaria plantaginifolia*, sweet-gale, epigæa, *Populus grandidentata*, *Salix tristis*, *Viola ovata* (Ellen Emerson found it April 20th), *Potentilla Canadensis*, comptonia, *Thalictrum anemonoides*, *Anemone nemorosa*, *V. blanda*, *P. balsamifera*, *Aquilegia Canadensis*, *Hedyotis cærulea*, andromeda, *Fragaria Virginiana* (?) (distinguished from the other species in fruit), *Salix alba*, benzoin, *Amelanchier Canadensis* var. *Botryapium*. Peach, cultivated cherry, and the following apparently just begun: *Viola pedata*, *Ostrya Virginica*, *V. cucullata* (Ellen Emerson says she saw it the 30th *ult.;* it is to be looked for at Depot Field Brook). And *Rumex Acetosella* shows red and is eight inches high on Columbine Cliff.

The expanding leaves of the sugar maples now make small crosses against the sky. Other conspicuous green leaves are the gooseberry, currant, elder,

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the willows just beginning, and alder, and apple trees and high blackberry, amelanchier, meadow-sweet, beside many herbaceous plants. Drosera (round-leaved) leaves now. Sedge-grass (early sedge) very abundant still. The *Vaccinium Pennsylvanicum* is just ready to bloom and also the *vacillans* nearly. These things observed on way—

To Cliffs.

The oak leaves on the plain are fallen. The colors are now: light blue above (where is my cyanometer? Saussure invented one, and Humboldt used it in his travels); landscape russet and greenish, spotted with fawn-colored plowed lands, with green pine and gray or reddish oak woods intermixed, and dark-blue or slate-colored water here and there. It is greenest in the meadows and where water has lately stood, and a strong, invigorating scent comes up from the fresh meadows. It is like the greenness of an apple faintly or dimly appearing through the russet.

A phœbe's nest and one cream-colored white egg at the spring-house; nest of mud, lined with grass and edged with hypnum. Channing has seen a robin's nest and eggs. I hear a black and white creeper at the Cliffs, and a chewink.

The shrub oaks are well budded. The young ivy leaves are red on Cliffs. Oaks and hickory buds just ready to open. How aromatic the balm-of-Gilead buds now!

The large woolly ferns and others stand up a foot on banks. The skunk-cabbage leaves green the warm, springy meads.

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Was it not the black and yellow or spotted warbler [1] I saw by the Corner Spring? Apparently black, brown-striped, with a yellow rump and also yellow wing, shoulders, and sides of breast, with a large black spot on breast; size of phœbe nearly; note somewhat like yellowbird. Yet I think it much too dark for the myrtle-bird.

Columbine Cliff a place to look for early rue anemones and *nemorosa* and dandelions. The columbines have been out some days. How ornamental to these dark-colored perpendicular cliffs, nodding from the clefts and shelves!

The barn swallow is about.

Have we the *Viola lanceolata*? [2] Is not the *Botryapium* our earliest variety of amelanchier, and what difference in the fruit?

Channing says he has heard the wood thrush, brown thrasher, and stake-driver (?), since I have been gone. This and last page for birds which I find come in the interval. Did I not see the oven-bird yesterday?

May 2. Summer yellowbird on the opening *Salix alba*. Chimney swallows and the bank or else cliff ditto. Small pewee?

Our earliest gooseberry in garden has bloomed. What is that pondweed-like plant floating in a pool near Breed's, with a slender stem and linear leaves and a small whorl of minute leaves on the surface,

[1] *Vide* May 10th.

[2] Yes. *Vide* Hubbard's meadow, by willows.

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and nutlets in the axils of the leaves, along the stem, as if now out of bloom?[1] Missouri currant.

May 4. Cattle are going up country. Hear the *tull-lull* of the chickadee (?).[2] The currant in bloom. The Canada plum just ready, probably to-day.[3]

8 A. M. — To Walden and Cliffs.

The sound of the oven-bird. Caterpillar nests two or three inches in diameter on wild cherries; caterpillars one third of an inch long.

The *Vaccinium Pennsylvanicum* appeared yesterday. The *vacillans*, *resinosum* (?), and early high blueberry will bloom in a few days. *Vide Cerasus pumila* by shanty path, and wild red ditto, as early. The white birch leaves are beginning to expand and are shining with some sticky matter. I must attend to their fragrance. In a warm place on the Cliffs one of their catkins shows its anthers, the golden pendant.

The woods and paths next them now ring with the silver jingle of the field sparrow, the medley of the brown thrasher, the honest *qui vive* of the chewink, or his jingle from the top of a low copse tree, while his

[1] *Callitriche verna.*

[2] [The word "chickadee" is crossed out and "myrtle-bird" substituted, which latter is in turn crossed out and replaced by "white-throat sparrow." The final correction would seem to have been made some years after the original entry, for in January, 1858, we find Thoreau getting what appears to be his first intimation as to the real authorship of this song (see *Journal*, vol. x.). In the manuscript notes of the excursion to the Maine Woods in 1857, the song of the white-throat is still attributed to the "myrtle-bird."]

[3] Not before the 7th.

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mate scratches in the dry leaves beneath; the black and white creeper is hopping along the oak boughs, head downward, pausing from time to time to utter its note like a fine, delicate saw-sharpening; and ever and anon rises clear over all the smooth, rich melody of the wood thrush. Could that have been a jay? I think it was some large, uncommon woodpecker that uttered that very loud, strange, cackling note.

The dry woods have the smell of fragrant everlasting. I am surprised by the cool drops which now, at 10 o'clock, drop from the flowers of the amelanchier, while other plants are dry, as if these had attracted more moisture. The white pines have started.

The indigo-bird and mate; dark throat and light beneath, and white spot on wings, which is not described; a hoarse note, and rapid the first two or three syllables, — *twe twe twee*, dwelling on the last, or *twe twe twe twee-e*, or as if an *r* in it, *tre*, etc., not musical. The myrtle-bird, which makes me think the more that I saw the black and yellow warbler on Sunday.

I find apparently two varieties of the amelanchier, — the first I noticed, with *smooth* reddish delicate leaves and somewhat linear petals and loose racemes, petals sometimes pinkish; the second to-day, perhaps a little later than the first, leaves light-colored and downy and petals broader and perhaps not quite so long as the first, racemes more crowded. I am not sure that this is the variety *oblongifolium* of Gray.[1]

It is stated in the Life of Humboldt that he proved

[1] This appears to be the *Pyrus ovalis* or swamp pyrus of Bigelow and Willdeming.

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"that the expression, 'the ocean reflects the sky,' was a purely poetical, but not a scientifically correct one, as the sea is often blue when the sky is almost totally covered with light white clouds." He used Saussure's cyanometer even to measure the color of the sea. This might probably be used to measure the intensity of the color of blue flowers like lupines at a distance. Humboldt speaks of its having been proved that pine pollen falls from the atmosphere.

May 6. P. M. — To Nut Meadow Brook and Corner Spring.

Choice plum in gardens. The *Salix alba* is conspicuous and interesting in the landscape now, some bright yellow, truly golden (staminate?), some greenish, filling the air of causeways with a sweet scent. The whole landscape is many shades greener for the rain, almost a blue green. The leafing of the trees has commenced, and the forms of some, accordingly, begin to be defined. Some, however, like the large maples, elms, etc., look heavy and are defined by their samaræ and not yet by their leaves, which are not comparatively forward. I perceive the strong odor of horse-mint, rising dark above the brooks. Hear the loud echoing note of the peet-weet-weet-weet-weet. *Viola cucullata* at John Hosmer's ditch by Clamshell Hill. Four large robin's eggs in an apple tree. A ground-bird's nest with eggs. *Equisetum sylvaticum* in front of Hosmer's Gorge. I have seen no ducks since I returned from Haverhill on the 29th April. There are pretty large leaves on the young red maples (which have no

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flowers), disposed crosswise, as well as on the sugar maple, but not so with larger flowering maples. The maple-tops begin to look red now with the growing keys, at a distance, — crescents of red. *Uvularia sessilifolia* just begun. Common knawel, apparently for some time, though Bigelow says July (?). Those long spear-shaped buds of the viburnum have expanded into dark but handsome leaves rather early; probably *Viburnum nudum.*

As I walk through the village at evening, when the air is still damp after the rainy morning, I perceive and am exhilarated by the sweet scent of expanding leaves. The woods are beginning to be in the gray now; leaves and flower-buds generally expanding, covered with a mealy or downy web (which now reminds me of those plants like gnaphalium, swathed in cotton), a clean dirt, which whitens the coat of the walker.

May 7. Forenoon. — Up North River to stone-heaps. The willows (*Salix alba*) where I keep my boat resound with the hum of bees and other insects. The leaves of the aspen are perhaps the most conspicuous of any, though the *Salix alba*, from its mass and its flowers in addition, makes the greater impression. I hear the loud cackling of the flicker about the aspen at the rock. A gray squirrel is stealing along beneath. Hundreds of tortoises, painted and wood, are heard hurrying through the dry leaves on the bank, and seen tumbling into the water as my boat approaches; sometimes half a dozen and more are sunning on a floating rail, and one will remain with outstretched neck, its head

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moving slowly round in a semicircle, while the boat passes within a few feet. Fresh green meadow-grass is springing up, as the water goes down, and flags. The larch has grown a quarter of an inch or more, studded with green buds; not so forward as the Scotch larch. The hemlock and the pitch pine have also started.

The keys of the white maple are more than half an inch long, not including stem; a dull-purplish cottony white. They make no such show as the red. The keys of the red are longer-stemmed but as yet much smaller. The leaves of the white are perhaps most advanced, yet lost in the fruit. The catkins of the hop-hornbeam, yellow tassels hanging from the trees, which grow on the steep bank of the Assabet, give them a light, graceful, and quite noticeable appearance. It is among the more conspicuous growths now; yet the anthers shed no pollen yet. Smaller trees and limbs which have few or no catkins have leaves, elm-like, already an inch long. The black cherry leaves are among the more conspicuous, more than an inch long. One of the many cherries which have when bruised the strong cherry scent. But this is the strongest and most rummy of all. The black oak buds are considerably expanded, probably more than any oaks. Their catkins are more than half an inch long. The swamp white oak is late, but the tips of the buds show yellowish green. The sugar maple in blossom, probably for a day or two, but since April 30th, though the peduncles are not half their length yet. Apple trees are greened with opening leaves, and their blossom-buds show the red.

As I advance up the Assabet, the lively note of the

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yellowbird is borne from the willows, and the creeper is seen busy amid the lichens of the maple, and the loud, jingling *tche tche tche tche*, etc., of the chip-bird rings along the shore occasionally. The chewink is seen and heard scratching amid the dry leaves like a hen. The woods now begin to ring with the woodland note of the oven-bird. I hear the mew of the first cat-bird, and, soon after, its rich and varied melody; and there sits on a tree over the water the ungainly king-fisher, who flies off with an apparently laborious flight, sounding his alarum.

A few yellow lily pads are already spread out on the surface, tender reddish leaves, with a still crenate or scalloped border like that of some tin platters on which turnovers are cooked, while the muddy bottom is almost everywhere spotted with the large reddish ruffle-like leaves, from the midst of which the flower-stems already stand up a foot, aiming toward the light and heat. That long reddish *bent* grass abounds on the river now. That small kind of pondweed, with a whorl of small leaves on the surface and nutlets already in the axils of the very common linear leaves, is common in the river.

I hear the *witter-che* of the Maryland yellow-throat, also, on the willows. The note of the peetweet resounds along the river, — standing on the rocks laid bare by the fallen water or running along the sandy shore. The rich medley of the thrasher is also heard.

In the frog-spawn (which looks like oats in a jelly, masses as big as the fist), I distinguish the form of the pollywog, which squirms a little. The female flowers

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of the sweet-gale, somewhat like but larger and more crowded than the hazel, is now an interesting sight along the edge of the river. That early cross-like plant is a foot high and budded.

The stone-heaps have been formed since I was here before, methinks about a month ago, and for the most part of fresh stones; *i. e.*, piles several feet in diameter by a foot high have evidently been made (no doubt commonly on the ruins of old ones) within a month. The stones are less than the size of a hen's egg, down to a pebble; now all under water. The Haverhill fisherman found the young of the common eel in such, and referred them to it.

I take it to be the small pewee whose smart chirp I hear so commonly. The delicate cherry-like leaf, transparent red, of the shad-bush is now interesting, especially in the sun. Some have green leaves. There is one of the former, five inches in diameter and eighteen or twenty feet high, on the Island, with only four to six flowers to a raceme. Heard a stake-driver. Saw a large snake, I think a black one, drop into the river close by; pursued, and as he found me gaining, he dived when he had reached the middle, and that was the last I saw of him. Fishing has commenced in the river. A white-throated sparrow (*Fringilla Pennsylvanica*) died in R. W. E.'s garden this morning. Half the streak over eye yellow. A passer. The odor of the sweet-briar along the side of a house. Riding through Lincoln, found the peach bloom now in prime, generally a dark pink with a lighter almost white inmixed, more striking from the complete absence of leaves,

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and especially when seen against the green of pines. I can find no wild gooseberry in bloom yet. The barberry bushes are in some places now quite green.

Various grasses in bloom for a week.

With respect to leafing, the more conspicuous and forward trees and shrubs are the following, and nearly in this order, as I think, and these have formed *small* leaves: Gooseberry, aspens (not *grandidentata*), willows, *young* maples of all kinds, balm-of-Gilead (?), elder, meadow-sweet, back cherry, and is that Jersey tea on Island? or diervilla? ostrya, alder, white birch and the three others, *Pyrus arbutifolia* (?), apple, amelanchier, choke(?)-cherry, dwarf ditto, wild red, *Viburnum nudum* (?) and *Lentago*, barberry.

The following are bursting into leaf: Hazel, shrub oak, black oak and red, white pine, larch, cornel, thorns, etc., elms.

Yorrick.[1]

Some birds — pewees, ground birds, robins, etc. — have already built nests and laid their eggs, before the leaves are expanded or the fields fairly green. Heard to-day that more slumbrous stertorous sound (not the hoarse one of early frogs) as I paddled up the river. Is it tortoises? These are abundantly out.

The *Viola pedata* with the large pale-blue flower is now quite common along warm sandy banks. The *ovata* is a smaller and darker and striped violet.

May 8. P. M. — To Annursnack.

A long row of elms just set out by Wheeler from his

[1] [This was Thoreau's rendering of the veery's call-note.]

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gate to the old Lee place. The planting of so long a row of trees which are so stately and may endure so long deserves to be recorded. In many localities a much shorter row, or even a few scattered trees, set out sixty or a hundred years since, is the most conspicuous as well as interesting relic of the past in sight. Nothing more proves the civility of one's ancestors.

The *Ribes floridum*, wild black currant, just begun by the wooden bridge just this side of the Assabet stone bridge, with dotted leaves. The thimble-berry and high blackberry leaves are among the *most* forward. That large reddish-stemmed cornel shows now narrow green buds tipped with reddish, three quarters of an inch long by one quarter wide.

Some thrashers are plainly better singers than others.

How surprising and interesting this cluster of leek buds on the rock in the Jesse Hosmer farm, composed of thick, succulent green leaves, cactus-like, tipped with dull purple, in buds from a half-inch to three inches in diameter! What tenacity of life! Its leaves so disposed (from circumference to centre) as to break joints. Some place it on a gate-post to grow high and dry above the earth for a curiosity. It may be a convenient symbol.

At the foot of Annursnack, rising from the Jesse Hosmer meadow, was surprised by the brilliant pale scarlet flowers of the painted-cup (*Castilleja coccinea*) just coming into bloom. Some may have been out a day or two. Methinks this the most high-colored and brilliant flower yet, not excepting the columbine.

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In color it matches Sophia's cactus blossoms exactly. It is all the more interesting for being a painted leaf and not petal, and its spidery leaves, pinnatifid with linear divisions, increase its strangeness. It is now from three to six inches high, rising from the moist base of the hill. It is wonderful what a variety of flowers may grow within the range of a walk, and how long some very conspicuous ones may escape the most diligent walker, if you do not chance to visit their localities the right week or fortnight, when their signs are out. It is a flaming leaf. The very leaf has flowered; not the ripe tints of autumn, but the rose in the cheek of infancy; a more positive flowering. Still more abundant on the same ground was the *Erigeron bellidifolius*, robin's-plantain,[1] with a pale-purple ray still erect, like a small thimble, not yet horizontal. This, then, its very earliest date. Neither of these did I see last year, and I was affected as if I had got into a new botanical district. A kind of mint,[2] shoots now six or eight inches high, with a velvety purple or lake under surface to leaves.

They have cut off the woods, and with them the shad-bush, on the top of Annursnack, but laid open new and wider prospects. The landscape is in some respects more interesting because of the overcast sky, threatening rain; a cold southwest wind. I am struck and charmed by the quantity of forest, especially in the southwest, after having witnessed the bareness of the Haverhill country. It is as if every farmer had a beautiful garden and boundless plantations of trees

[1] *Vide* May 15th.

[2] The soft-leaved calamint.

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and shrubs, such as no imperial wealth can surpass. The pyramidal pine-tops are now seen rising out of a reddish mistiness of the deciduous trees just bursting into leaf. A week ago the deciduous woods had not this misty look,[1] and the evergreens were more sharply divided from them, but now they have the appearance of being merged in or buoyed up in a mist. I am not [*sic*] sure what is the cause of the reddish line around the lower edges of the wood. It is plainly the red maple, and in many places, no doubt, the shrub oak. The oaks are plainly more gray already and some trees greenish. *Vide* again after a week.

The catkins of the black birch appear more advanced than those of the white birch. They are very large, four inches long, half a dozen gracefully drooping at the ends of the twigs bent down by their weight, conspicuous at a distance in wisps, as if dry leaves left on, very rich golden. The yellow birch is the first I have noticed fully in bloom, — considerably in advance of the others. Its flowers smell like its bark. Methinks the black and the paper birch next, and then the white, or all nearly together. The leaves of the *papyracea* unfold like a fan and are sticky. How fresh and glossy! And the catkins I gather shed pollen the next morning.

Some hickory buds are nearly two inches long. The handsome finely divided leaves of the pedicularis are conspicuous. It is now budded amid the painted-cups. The fruit of the *Populus grandidentata* appears puffed up and blasted into a large bright yellow [*sic*], like some

[1] [Two interrogation-points in pencil here.]

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plums some seasons. The thorn bushes have so far

leaved out on the north side of Annursnack as to reveal their forms, as I look up the hill and see them against the light. They are remarkably uniform, somewhat like this, the leading shoot finally rising above the rest, somewhat like a broad poplar.

May 9. Since I returned from Haverhill, not only I find the ducks are gone, but I no longer hear the *chill-lill* of the blue snowbird or the sweet strains of the fox-colored sparrow and the tree sparrow. The robin's strain is less remarkable.

I have devoted most of my day to Mr. Alcott. He is broad and genial, but indefinite; some would say feeble; forever feeling about vainly in his speech and touching nothing. But this is a very negative account of him, for he thus suggests far more than the sharp and definite practical mind. The feelers of his thought diverge, — such is the breadth of their grasp, — not converge; and in his society almost alone I can express at my leisure, with more or less success, my vaguest but most cherished fancy or thought. There are never any obstacles in the way of our meeting. He has no creed. He is not pledged to any institution. The sanest man I ever knew; the fewest crotchets, after all, has he.[1]

It has occurred to me, while I am thinking with pleasure of our day's intercourse, "Why should I not think aloud to you?" Having each some shingles of thought well dried, we walk and whittle them, trying our knives, and admiring the clear yellowish grain of the pump-

[1] [*Walden*, p. 296; Riv. 416.]

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kin pine. We wade so gently and reverently, or we pull together so smoothly, that the fishes of thought are not scared from the stream, but come and go grandly, like yonder clouds that float peacefully through the western sky. When we walk it seems as if the heavens — whose mother-o'-pearl and rainbow tints come and go, form and dissolve — and the earth had met together, and righteousness and peace had kissed each other. I have an ally against the arch-enemy. A blue-robed man dwells under the blue concave. The blue sky is a distant reflection of the azure serenity that looks out from under a human brow.[1] We walk together like the most innocent children, going after wild pinks with case-knives. Most with whom I endeavor to talk soon fetch up against some institution or particular way of viewing things, theirs not being a universal view. They will continually bring their own roofs or — what is not much better — their own narrow skylights between us and the sky, when it is the unobstructed heavens I would view. Get out of the way with your old Jewish cobwebs. Wash your windows.[2]

Saw on Mr. Emerson's firs several parti-colored warblers, or finch creepers (*Sylvia Americana*), a small blue and yellow bird, *somewhat* like but smaller than the indigo-bird; quite tame, about the buds of the firs, now showing red; often head downward. Heard no note. He says it has been here a day or two.

At sundown paddled up the river.

[1] [*Walden*, p. 297; Riv. 416, 417.]

[2] [*Cape Cod, and Miscellanies*, p. 469; *Misc.* Riv. 271.]

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The pump-like note of a stake-driver from the fenny place across the Lee meadow.

The greenest and rankest grass as yet is that in the water along the sides of the river. The hylodes are peeping. I love to paddle now at evening, when the water is smooth and the air begins to be warm. The rich warble of blackbirds about retiring is loud and incessant, not to mention the notes of numerous other birds. The black willow has started, but not yet the button-bush. Again I think I heard the night-warbler. Now, at starlight, that same nighthawk or snipe squeak is heard, but no hovering. The first bat goes suddenly zigzag overhead through the dusky air; comes out of the dusk and disappears into it. That slumbrous, snoring croak, far less ringing and musical than the toad's (which is occasionally heard), now comes up from the meadow's edge. I save a floating plank, which exhales and imparts to my hands the rank scent of the muskrats which have squatted on it. I often see their fresh green excrement on rocks and wood. Already men are fishing for pouts.

This has been almost the first warm day; none yet quite so warm. Walking to the Cliffs this afternoon, I noticed, on Fair Haven Hill, a season stillness, as I looked over the distant budding forest and heard the buzzing of a fly.

May 10. 5 A. M. — Up railroad.

The *veery* note after having heard the *yorrick* for some days, in the primitive-looking pine swamp. Heard also that peculiarly wild evergreen-forest note which

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I heard May 6th, from a small, lisping warbler, — *er er ter re rer ree*, — from high in the pines, as if a chickadee (?); or was it the still smaller, slenderer white-bellied bird I saw? Female (?) yellowbird (?) this morning. All at once a strain which sounded like old times and recalled a hundred associations. Not at once did I remember that a year had elapsed since I heard it, and then the idea of the bobolink was formed in my mind, yet I afterward doubted if it was not the imitation of a catbird.[1] Saw a kingbird, looking like [a] large phœbe, on a willow by the river, and heard higher the clear whistle of the oriole. New days, then, have come, ushered in by the warbling vireo, yellowbird, Maryland yellow-throat, and small pewee, and now made perfect by the twittering of the kingbird and the whistle of the oriole amid the elms (for I hear the last in various parts of the town within a few hours), which are but just beginning to leaf out, thinking of his nest there, — if not already the bobolink. The warbling vireo promised warmer days, but the oriole ushers in summer heats.

There is an old pasture behind E. Wood's incrusted with the clay-like thallus of the bæomyces, which is unexpectedly thin. The fruit now large.

How far the woodpecker's tapping is heard! And no wonder, for he taps very hard as well as fast, to make a hole, and the dead, dry wood is very resounding withal. Now he taps on one part of the tree, and it yields one note; then on that side, a few inches distant, and it yields another key; propped on its tail the while.

[1] It was the bobolink.

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The pear has blossomed. The butternut buds are more advanced than any hickories I have noticed.

P. M. — To Saw Mill Brook and Smith's Hill.

The *Nepeta Glechoma* is out under R. Brown's poles, a pretty deep-blue, half-concealed, violet-like flower. It is the earliest flower of this character. Warm days when you begin to *think* of thin coats.

I proceed down the Turnpike. The masses of the golden willow are seen in the distance on either side the way, twice as high as the road is wide, conspicuous against the distant, still half-russet hills and forests, for the green grass hardly yet prevails over the dead stubble, and the woods are but just beginning to gray. The female willow is a shade greener. At this season the traveller passes through a golden gate on causeways where these willows are planted, as if he were approaching the entrance to Fairyland; and there will surely be found the yellowbird, and already from a distance is heard his note, a *tche tche tche tcha tchar tcha*, — ah, willow, willow. Could not he truly arrange for us the difficult family of the willows better than Borrer, or Barratt of Middletown? And as he passes between the portals, a sweet fragrance is wafted to him; he not only breathes but scents and tastes the air, and he hears the low humming or susurrus of a myriad insects which are feeding on its sweets. It is, apparently, these that attract the yellowbird. The golden gates of the year, the *May*-gate. The traveller cannot pass out of Concord by the highways in any direction without passing between such portals, — graceful, curving,

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drooping, wand-like twigs, on which leaves and blossoms appear together.

It is remarkable that I saw this morning for the first time the bobolink, gold robin, and kingbird, — and have since heard the first two in various parts of the town and am satisfied that they have just come, — and, in the woods, the veery note. I hear the ringing sound of the toads borne on the rippling wind as I keep down the causeway.

He is the richest who has most use for nature as raw material of tropes and symbols with which to describe his life. If these gates of golden willows affect me, they correspond to the beauty and promise of some experience on which I am entering. If I am overflowing with life, am rich in experience for which I lack expression, then nature will be my language full of poetry, — all nature will *fable*, and every natural phenomenon be a myth. The man of science, who is not seeking for expression but for a fact to be expressed merely, studies nature as a dead language. I pray for such inward experience as will make nature significant.

That sedum (?) by Tuttle's is now a foot high; has no great cactus-like buds, and is quite distinct from the house-leek in Jesse Hosmer's field. What is it? A gooseberry which has been in blossom for some time, by the roadside on the left, between Wright's and Hosmer's old place. It is apparently *Ribes hirtellum*. Is that the swamp gooseberry of Gray, now just beginning to blossom at Saw Mill Brook? It has a divided style and stamens, etc., as yet not longer than the

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calyx, though my slip has no thorns nor prickles. The leaves are deeply divided and glossy. But what is the *stout, prickly* gooseberry in the garden, with *divided* style? It seems the *Cynosbati* of Bigelow, yet not of Gray. A cerastium, apparently *viscosum*, on right hand just beyond the Hosmer house. What kind? A wild red cherry (*Cerasus Pennsylvanica*) just out by the first-named gooseberry. I was surprised by the number of bees above this gooseberry's blossoms, small and inconspicuous as they are. Indeed there is scarcely a flower which is not immediately found out by insects, and their coming must be coincident with flowers and leaves. Some of the most forward plantain-leaved antennaria is already pinkish at top.

You hear the clear whistle and see the red or fiery orange of the oriole darting through Hosmer's orchard. But its note is not melodious and rich. It is at most a clear tone, the healthiest of your city beaux and belles.

When I heard the first bobolink strain this morning I could not at first collect myself enough to tell what it was I heard, — a reminiscence of last May in all its prime occurring in the midst of the experience of this in its unripe state. Suddenly, the season being sufficiently advanced, the atmosphere in the right condition, these flashing, scintillating notes are struck out from it where that dark mote disappears through it, as sparks by a flint, with a tinkling sound. This flashing, tinkling meteor bursts through the expectant meadow air, leaving a train of tinkling notes behind. Successive regiments of birds arrive and are disbanded. in our fields, like soldiers still wearing their

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regimentals. I doubted at first if it were not a strain brought on a few days in advance by an imitative catbird or thrush (?) from where he had been staying.

Within a day or more, a lower and decidedly downy and small racemed amelanchier has opened, and I think that the first and slightly downy and greenish-leaved ones are associated with the decidedly smooth and red-leaved *Botryapium*. Is not this now the most conspicuous native flower? The *Vaccinium vacillans* is out.

The three colored violets, as I observe them this afternoon, are thus distinguished: the *ovata*, a dark lilac, especially in sun; the *cucullata*, oftenest slaty-blue, sometimes lilac, deeper within, more or less pale and striped; the *pedata*, large, exposed, clear pale-blue with a white spot. None like the sky, but *pedata* most like it; lilac *ovata* least like it. Yet the last is the richest-colored. The *pedata* often pale to whiteness. It begins now to be quite obvious along the side of warm and sandy woodland paths.

Saw, quite near, a skunk, in a cloud of long, coarse black and white hair, within a rod and a half, sharply staring at me with head to the ground, with its black, shining, bead-like eyes. It was at the edge of its hole. Its head is so narrow, and snout long and pointed, that it can make those deep holes in the spring. By the way, what makes these innumerable little punctures just through the grass in woodland paths, as with a stick? Is this, too, by the skunk?

The chestnut leaves are now commonly as far unfolded as the larger maples and earlier oaks and more than the elm; yet perhaps it should come after the

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red and black oaks. The aspen *leaves* (*P. tremuliformis*), at least a few days since, were decidedly the most forward and conspicuous of any tree, and are still, I think, being more than an inch in diameter, light-green, but open and trembling and not in dense masses. Only the rather rare paper birch and an occasional white birch in a favorable place (I see no black nor yellow ones this afternoon) can be compared with it, and such, indeed, make now, at last, a denser green; but in the case of the golden willow it is as much flowers as leaves that make the show. But the *P. grandidentata* which have flowered show no leaves yet; only very young ones, small downy leaves now. Of sizable wild trees which blossom, the most forward in respect to leafing, methinks, are the tremble, the willows, wild black cherry, the birches (the *papyracea* especially), balm-of-Gilead, *Ostrya*. The spring growth of the larch is the most conspicuous of evergreens [*sic*], though its buds have not pushed out so far as the white pines. As on the late willows, so on the oaks, catkins and leaves appearing together. Both leaf and flower buds of the oaks, especially shrub oaks and red and black, are reddish (the white and swamp white are not at present), and hence the *reddish* mistiness of the deciduous woods at present.

At Saw Mill Brook, I see the flower-buds of the nodding trillium. I sit on a rock in Saw Mill Brook.

The hornbeam (*Carpinus*) is just ready to bloom, its hop-like catkins, shorter than those of the *Ostrya*, do not shed pollen just yet.[1] I was in search of this,

[1] Does next morning in pitcher.

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and, not observing it at first, and having forgotten it, I sat down on a rock, with the thought that if I sat there quietly a little while I might see some flower or other object about me; unexpectedly, as I cast my eyes upward, over my head stretched a spreading branch of the carpinus full of small catkins with anthers now reddish, spread like a canopy just over my head. As it is best to sit in a grove and let the birds come to you, so, as it were, even the flowers will come to you.

I sit here surrounded by hellebores eighteen inches high or more, with handsome, regular, plaited leaves, regularly arranged around the erect stems, and a multitude of ferns are unrolling themselves, altogether making the impression of a tropical vegetation.

I hear, and have for a week, in the woods, the note of one or more small birds somewhat like a yellow-bird's. What is it? Is it the redstart? I now see one of these. The first I have distinguished. And now I feel pretty certain that my black and yellow warbler of May 1st was this. As I sit, it inquisitively hops nearer and nearer. It is one of the election-birds of rare colors which I can remember, mingled dark and reddish. This reminds me that I supposed much more variety and fertility in nature before I had learned the numbers and the names of each order. I find that I had expected such fertility in our Concord woods alone as not even the completest museum of stuffed birds of all the forms and colors from all parts of the world comes up to. The neat and active creeper hops about the trunks, its note like a squeaking twig.

I leave the woods and begin to ascend Smith's

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Hill along the course of the rill. The anemonies with reddish-pink buds stand thick amid the loose grass under protecting brush or fagots, about rocks and young trees.

From the hill, I look westward over the landscape. The deciduous woods are in their hoary youth, every expanding bud swaddled with downy webs. From this more eastern hill, with the whole breadth of the river valley on the west, the mountains appear higher still, the width of the blue border is greater, — not mere peaks, or a short and shallow sierra, but a high blue table-land with broad foundations, a deep and solid base or tablet, in proportion to the peaks that rest on it. As you ascend, the near and low hills sink and flatten into the earth; no sky is seen behind them; the distant mountains rise. The truly great are distinguished. Vergers, crests of the waves of earth, which in the highest break at the summit into granitic rocks over which the air beats. A part of their hitherto concealed base is seen blue. You see, not the domes only, but the body, the façade, of these terrene temples. You see that the foundation answers to the superstructure. Moral structures. (The sweet-fern leaves among odors now.) The successive lines of haze which divide the western landscape, deeper and more misty over each intervening valley, are not yet very dense; yet there is a light atmospheric line along the base of the mountains for their whole length, formed by this denser and grosser atmosphere through which we look next the earth, which almost melts them into the atmosphere, like the contact of

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molten metal with that which is unfused; but their pure, sublimed tops and main body rise, palpable sky-land above it, like the waving signal of the departing who have already left these shores. It will be worth the while to observe carefully the direction and altitude of the mountains from the Cliffs. The value of the mountains in the horizon, — would not that be a good theme for a lecture? The text for a discourse on real values, and permanent; a sermon on the mount. They are stepping-stones to heaven, — as the rider has a horse-block at his gate, — by which to mount when we would commence our pilgrimage to heaven; by which we gradually take our departure from earth, from the time when our youthful eyes first rested on them, — from this bare actual earth, which has so little of the hue of heaven. They make it easier to die and easier to live. They let us off.

(With Alcott almost alone is it possible to put all institutions behind us. Every other man owns some stock in this or that one, and will not forget it.)

Whether any picture by a human master hung on our western wall could supply their place. Whether to shovel them away and level them would really smooth the way to the true west. Whether the skies would not weep over their scars. They are valuable to mankind as is the iris of the eye to a man. They are the path of the translated. The undisputed territory between earth and heaven. In our travels rising higher and higher, we at length got to where the earth was blue. Suggesting that this earth, unless our conduct curse it, is as celestial as that sky. They are the

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pastures to which we drive our thoughts on these 20ths of May. (George Baker told me the other day that he had driven cows to Winchendon, forty miles, in one day.) Men often spend a great deal on a border to their papered walls, of the costliest figure and colors, ultramarine (or what other?). This color bears a price like precious stones. We may measure our wealth, then, by the number of square rods of superficial *blue* earth in our earth border. Such proportion as it bears to the area of the visible earth, in such proportion are we heavenly-minded. Yet I doubt if I can find a man in this country who would not think it better if they were converted into solid gold, which could in no case be a blessing to all, but only a curse to a few, — and so they would be stepping-stones to hell.

Return by Mill Brook Ditch Path. There is now a multiplicity of sounds, in which the few faint spring ones are drowned. The birds are in full blast, singing, warbling, chirping, humming. Yet we do not receive more ideas through our ears than before. The storms and ducks of spring have swept by and left us to the repose of summer, the farmers to the ignoble pursuits of planting and hoeing corn and potatoes. The summer is not bracing, as when you hear the note of the jay in the cool air of October from the rustling chestnut woods. Hear the night-warbler now distinctly. It does not soon repeat its note, and disappears with the sound. I mistook a distant farmer's horn calling the men to early tea for the low hum of a bee in the grass. Heard a tree-toad. The pond, Walden, has risen considerably since the melting.

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May 11. 5 A. M. — In the morning and evening, when waters are still and smooth, and dimpled by innate currents only, not disturbed by foreign winds and currents of the air, and reflect more light than at noonday. [*Sic.*]

P. M. — To Corner Spring *via* Hubbard's Bathing-Place.

The buck-bean is budded, but hard to find now. The *Viola lanceolata* is now abundant thereabouts, methinks larger and quite as fragrant (which is not saying much) as the *blanda*. How long has it been open? It is a warm afternoon, and great numbers of painted and spotted tortoises are lying in the sun in the meadow. I notice that the thin scales are peeling off of one of the painted and curled up more than half an inch at the edges, and others look as if they had just lost them, the dividing-line being of a dull cream-color. Has this lying in the sun anything to do with it? I nearly stepped upon a song sparrow and a striped snake at the same time. The bird fluttered away almost as if detained. I thought it was a case of charming, without doubt, and should think so still if I had not found her nest with five eggs there, which will account for her being so near the snake that was about to devour her. The amelanchier has a sickish fragrance. It must be the myrtle-bird which is now so common in Hubbard's Meadow Woods or Swamp, with a note somewhat like a yellowbird's, striped olive-yellow and black on back or shoulders, light or white beneath, black dim; restless bird; sharp head. The catbird has a squeaking and split note with some clear whistles.

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The late pipes (*limosum?*), now nearly a foot high, are very handsome, like Oriental work, their encircled columns of some precious wood or gem, or like small bamboos, from Oriental jungles. Very much like art. The gold-thread, apparently for a day or two, though few flowers compared with buds; not at once referred to its leaf, so distant on its thread-like peduncle. The water-saxifrage also for a day or two in some places, on its tall, straight stem, rising from its whorl of leaves. Sorrel now fairly out in some places. I will put it under May 8th. A high blueberry by Potter's heater piece. A yellow lily.

The red-eye at the spring; quite a woodland note. The different moods or degrees of wildness and poetry of which the song of birds is the keynote. The wood thrush Mr. Barnum never hired nor can, though he could bribe Jenny Lind and put her into his cage. How many little birds of the warbler family are busy now about the opening buds, while I sit by the spring! They are almost as much a part of the tree as its blossoms and leaves. They come and give it voice. Its twigs feel with pleasure their little feet clasping them.

I hear the distant drumming of a partridge. Its beat, however distant and low, falls still with a remarkably forcible, almost painful, impulse on the ear, like veritable little drumsticks on our tympanum, as if it were a throbbing or fluttering in our veins or brows or the chambers of the ear, and belonging to ourselves, — as if it were produced by some little insect which had made its way up into the passages of the ear, so penetrating is it. It is as palpable to the

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ear as the sharpest note of a fife. Of course, that bird can drum with its wings on a log which can go off with such a powerful whir, beating the air. I have seen a thoroughly frightened hen and cockerel fly almost as powerfully, but neither can sustain it long. Beginning slowly and deliberately, the partridge's beat sounds faster and faster from far away under the boughs and through the aisles of the wood until it becomes a regular roll, but is speedily concluded. How many things shall we not see and be and do, when we walk there where the partridge drums!

As I stand by the river in the truly warm sun, I hear the low trump of a bullfrog, but half sounded, — doubting if it be really July, — some bassoon sounds, as it were the tuning that precedes the summer's orchestra; and all is silent again. How the air is saturated with sweetness on causeways these willowy days! The willow alone of trees as yet makes light, often *rounded masses* of verdure in large trees, stage above stage. But oftenest they are cut down at the height of four or five feet and spread out thence. There appear to be most clouds in the horizon on [one] of these days of drifting downy clouds, because, when we look that way, more fall within our field of view, but when we look upward, overhead we see the true proportion of clear blue.

The mountains are something solid which is blue, a *terra firma* in the heavens; but in the heavens there is nothing but the air. Blue is the color of the day, and the sky is blue by night as well as by day, because it knows no night.

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May 12. 5.30 A. M. — To Nawshawtuct by river.

The first considerable fog I have noticed, at first as high as the trees, curling gray over the water now beneath me, as I paddle my boat, and through it I see the welling dimples of the still stream. You are pretty sure now to hear the stake-driver farther or nearer, morning or evening. Thought I heard a tanager. What are those dark-brown striped sparrow-like birds, rather tame, on hickories, size of myrtle-bird, mottled with black on breast and more or less distinct yellowish on rump and wing shoulder, at least on male; somewhat brown-creeper-looking, without long bill? The fog has now risen up as high as the houses at 6.15 and mingled with the smokes of the town. The first [*sic*] are puffed up as if they were cold, to nearly twice their size, as they sit on willows. The yellowbird has another note, *tchut tchut tchar te tchit e war.*

P. M. — To Black Birch Woods and Yellow Birch Swamp.

Veronica serpyllifolia at Flint's and along the roadsides, apparently for some time, for not only are there some frost-bitten flowers, but pods alone as large as flowers, even as if they belonged to last year. Yet is it any earlier than May? A pretty but minute bluish flower.

Some grass is seen to wave in the distance on the side of N. Barrett's warm hill, showing the lighter under sides. That is a soft, soothing, June-like impression when the most forward grass is seen to wave and the sorrel looks reddish. The year has the down

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of youth on its cheek. This, too, is the era of the bobolink, now, when apple trees are ready to burst into bloom. Now it is too late to retreat from the summer adventure. You have passed the Rubicon, and will spend your summer here. Lately, for a few days, the note of the pine warbler rang through the woods, but now it is lost in the notes of other birds. Then each song was solo. Its *vetter vetter vetter vetter* rang through silent woods. Now I rarely hear it. A yellow butterfly.

The river meadows from Barrett's wall are very green where the water has gone down. A wild pear in blossom on Ponkawtasset, detected by its uprightness and no large limbs; but the blossoms, being white, are not so handsome as the apple, but are earlier.

The *V. cucullata* are large and conspicuous on Barrett's side-hill. The *ovata* blue the ground in the Boulder Field. These and the *pedata* are all more or less lilac-colored, and it produces a pleasing bewilderment to pass from clump to clump, and one species to another, and say which is the most lilac. Putting one cluster beside another more lilac, the first no longer seems lilac at all. Has not violet then always some lilac in it?

The birches (white) are now rapidly and conspicuously greening. They make the first conspicuous mass of green amid the evergreens; not grayish or hoary like the oaks; a closer-woven light-green vest. The black birch is now a beautiful sight, its long, slender, bushy branches waving in the wind (the leaf-buds but just beginning to unfold), with countless little tassel-like bunches of five or six golden catkins, spotted with

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brown and three inches long, one bunch at the end of each drooping twig, hanging straight down, or dangling like heads of rye, or blown off at various angles with the horizon. All these, seen against the sky on the otherwise bare trees, make an exceedingly graceful outline, the catkin is so large and conspicuous. (On the white birch the catkins are more slender, and are concealed by the more forward leaves.) The reddish long female flowers are detected in the axils lower down. I notice that the staminate ones are apparently torn by birds, pecking at insects. Not a bunch is perfect. The yellow birch is considerably the most forward, — its flowers, not, perhaps, its leaves, which last are only expanded on young trees, though here is one large one leaved out. The yellow birch first, then the black or the paper birch, then the white. The staminate flowers of the yellow birch are already imbrowned and dry, and the female flowers large and hop-like, one inch long. The twigs of this tree are, methinks, still longer and slenderer than those of the black birch, a yard long by one sixth of an inch diameter at base without a branch at the ends of the limbs, or a yard and a half by a third of an inch with a little fork near the end, or often three inches in diameter by more than twenty feet; and so is described the whole tree, of long slender branches springing from the height of five or six feet upward in the form of a great brush. I do not know another place in town where there are black birches enough to give you the effect of a forest of these trees, but in a swamp here. They are so slender and brushy that they yield to the wind, and their tops, with gracefully

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drooping twigs bent down by dangling tassel-like catkins, are all inclined one way, sweeping the air, making a peculiarly light and graceful sight.

I am surprised to find the pedicularis, or lousewort, — a yellowish one, — out, on a warm bank near the meadow-edge. The hellebore is the most forward herb, two feet high.

The tupelo shows signs of life, but is later than the black willow; not so late, nearly, as the button-bush. The oaks are in the gray. Some in warm localities already have expanded small leaves, both black, red, and shrub oak. The large light-yellowish scales of the hickory buds, also, are turned back, revealing blossom-buds and little clusters of tender leaves ready to unfold, and the now [*sic*] web of verdure is spreading thick and palpable over the forest. Shade is being born; the summer is pitching its tent; concealment will soon be afforded to the birds in which to build their nests.

The robin nowadays betrays its great bare nest and blue eggs by its anxious peeping at your approach.

Is that the so-called Canada plum, now in bloom twenty rods this side the lime-kiln in the road? And is it ever indigenous here?

The farmers on all sides are mending their fences and turning out their cows to pasture. You see where the rails have been newly sharpened, and the leafing birches have been cut and laid over gaps in the walls, as if old fences were putting forth leaves.

The beautiful round red (?) buds of the grape now, like beads, at long intervals along the bare vine.

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William Wheeler has raised a new staring house beyond the Corner Bridge, and so done irreparable injury to a large section of country for walkers. It obliges us to take still more steps after weary ones, to reach the secluded fields and woods. Channing proposes that we petition him to put his house out of sight; that we send it in to him in the form of a round-robin with his name on one side and mine on the other, — so to abate a nuisance.

May 13. Methinks I hear and see the tanager now.

The middle of May is the time for many transient sylvias.

P. M. — To Conantum.

See a goldfinch glance by on the back road and hear its cool watery twitter. A little larger than a yellow-bird, more golden, or paler (?) yellow, with black [*sic*] and on wings. A robin's nest, with young, on the causeway. At Corner Spring, stood listening to a cat-bird, sounding a good way off. Was surprised to detect the singer within a rod and a half on a low twig, the ventriloquist. Should not have believed it was he, if I had not seen the movements of his throat, corresponding to each note, — looking at this near singer whose notes sounded so far away. There is a small bird or two I have not taken pains to identify; one's note, perhaps that of May 6th, *ee, ee, te ter twee,* like a fine squeaking amid the pines.

——'s peach trees in bloom, the richest, highest color of any tree's bloom, like wine compared to beer; the trees, bare of leaves, one mass of pink, some dark, some

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light, almost flame-like seen against green hillsides or the red ground where the woods have just been cut. How much more beautiful than the life of the peach-raiser! No such rich pink bloom falling through cracks in the dark shutters irradiates his soul. If only such a peach-bloom hue suffused the dark chambers of his soul! Large masses of bloom with the delicate tint which commonly belongs to minute plants only.

The bass is suddenly as forward in leaf as the white birch; leaves one inch across, how varnished, thin, and transparent! It is apparently the *Myosotis stricta*, now just in flower at Columbine Cliff, scorpion grass, minute and white, three inches high, somewhat like a cerastium. An *Arum triphyllum*, but no signs of pollen yet. Probably was set down too early last year, *i. e.* before pollen. A thorn with expanded leaves, not deeply lobed, and large red scales and a beautifully shining or varnished ash-colored twig. The male sassafras just out, probably yesterday, but the twig end is the sweetest. A big woodpecker enlarging the entrance to its nest in an apple tree. I thought it the echo of carpenters at work on Wheeler's house three quarters of a mile off. It was within four or five rods. How well the woodpecker must know by the ring if the tree is hollow, by this time!

Most of the anthers of the black ash are black and withered or blasted, but the rest show no pollen yet. Still methinks it [is] now in bloom; leaf-buds not started. The white ash (male), with its male buds conspicuous but not ready yet, its leaf-buds partly expanded. So, if its flowers are a little later, which is not certain, its

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leaves are earlier than the last. The sweet viburnum, apparently equally advanced with the *nudum*, but not so dark-colored, in advance of cornels. Hazelnuts next to birches.

Heard a stake-driver in Hubbard's meadow from Corner road. Thus far off, I hear only, or chiefly, the last dry, hard click or stroke part of the note, sounding like the echo from some near wood of a distant stake-driving. Here only this portion of the note, but close by it is more like pumping, when the dry stroke is accompanied by the incessant sound of the pump.

May 14. *Saturday*. 9 A. M. — To Wayland by boat.

E. Wood has added a pair of ugly wings to his house, bare of trees and painted white, particularly conspicuous from the river. You might speak of the alar extent of this house, monopolizing so much of our horizon; but alas! it is not formed for flight, after all.

The water is considerably rough to-day, and higher than usual at this season. The black willows have started, but make no show of green. The button-bushes are yet apparently dead. The green buds of yellow lilies are bobbing up and down, already showing more or less yellow; this the most forward sign in the water. The great scalloped platters of their leaves have begun to show themselves on the surface, and the red round leaves of the white lily, now red above as well as below. A myriad of polygonums, potamogetons, and pontederias are pushing up from the bottom, but have not yet reached the surface. Dande-

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lions and houstonias, etc., spot the meadows with yellow and white.

The still dead-looking willows and button-bushes are alive with red-wings,[1] now perched on a yielding twig, now pursuing a female swiftly over the meadow, now darting across the stream. No two have epaulets equally brilliant. Some are small and almost white, and others a brilliant vermilion. They are handsomer than the golden robin, methinks. The yellowbird, kingbird, and pewee, beside many swallows, are also seen. But the rich colors and the rich and varied notes of the blackbirds surpass them all.

Passing Conantum under sail at 10 o'clock, the cows in this pasture are already chewing the cud in the thin shade of the apple trees, a picture of peace, already enjoying the luxury of their green pastures. I was not prepared to find the season so far advanced. The breeze which comes over the water, sensibly cooled or freshened by it, is already grateful. Suddenly there start up from the riverside at the entrance of Fair Haven Pond, scared by our sail, two great blue herons, — slate-color rather, — slowly flapping and undulating, their projecting breast-bones very visible, — or is it possibly their necks bent back? — their legs stuck out straight behind. Getting higher by their flight, they straight come back to reconnoitre us.

Land at Lee's Cliff, where the herons have preceded us and are perched on the oaks, conspicuous from afar, and again we have a fair view of their flight.

[1] *Vide* June 11.

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We find here, unexpectedly, the warmth of June. The hot, dry scent, or say warm and balmy, from ground amid the pitch pines carpeted with red needles, where a wiry green grass is springing up, reminds us of June and of wild pinks. Under the south side of the Cliff, vegetation seems a fortnight earlier than elsewhere. Not only the beautiful little veronicas (*serpyllifolia*) are abundantly out, and cowslips past their prime, columbines past prime, and saxifrage gone to seed, some of it, and dandelions, and the sod sparkling with the pure, brilliant, spotless yellow of cinquefoil, also violets and strawberries, but the glossy or varnished yellow of buttercups (*bulbosus*, also abundant, some days out) spots the hillside. The south side of these rocks is like a hothouse where the gardener has removed his glass. The air, scented with sweetbriar, may almost make you faint in imagination. The nearer the base of the rock, the more forward each plant. The trees are equally forward, red and black; leaves an inch and a half long and shoots of three inches.

The prospect from these rocks is early-June-like. You notice the tender light green of the birches, both white and paper, and the brown-red tops of the maples where their keys are. Close under the lee of the button-bushes which skirt the pond, as I look south, there is a narrow smooth strip of water, silvery and contrasting with the darker rippled body of the pond. Its edge, or the separation between this, which I will call the polished silvery border of the pond, and the dark and ruffled body, is not a straight line or film,

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but an ever-varying, irregularly and finely serrated or fringed border, ever changing as the breeze falls over the bushes at an angle more or less steep, so that this moment it is a rod wide, the next not half so much. Every feature is thus fluent in the landscape.

Again we embark, now having furled our sail and taken to our oars. The air is clear and fine-grained, and as we glide by the hills I can look into the very roots of the grass amid the springing pines in their deepest valleys. The wind rises, but still it is not a cold wind. There is nothing but slate-colored water and a few red pads appearing at Lily Bay.

After leaving Rice's harbor the wind is with us again. What a fine tender *yellow* green from the meadow-grass just pushed up, where the sun strikes it at the right angle! How it contrasts with the dark bluish-green of that rye, already beginning to wave, which covers that little rounded hill by Pantry Brook! Grain waves earlier than grass. How flat the top of the muskrat's head as he swims, and his back, even with it, and then when he dives he ludicrously shows his tail. They look gray and brown, like a rabbit, now. At Forget-me-not Spring the chrysosplenium beds are very large, rich and deep, almost out of bloom. I find none of the early blackberry in bloom. It is mostly destroyed. Already we pluck and eat the sweet flag and detect small critch-icrotches. The handsome comandra leaves also are prominent. In the woods which skirt the river near

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Deacon Farrar's swamp, the *Populus grandidentata*, just expanding its downy leaves, makes silvery patches in the sun. It is abundant and truly silvery.

The paper birch woods at Fair Haven present this aspect: there is the somewhat dense light green of aspens (*tremuliformis*) and paper birches in the foreground next the water, both of one tint, and occasionally a red maple with brownish-red top, with — equally advanced, aye, more fully expanded, intermixed or a little higher up — very tall and slender amelanchiers (*Botryapium?*), some twenty-five feet high, on which no signs of fruit, though I have seen them on some; some silvery *grandidentata*, and red and black oaks (some yellowish, some reddish, green), and still reddish-white oaks, just starting; and green pines for contrast, showing the silvery under sides of their leaves or the edges of their dark stages (contrasting with their shaded under sides). These are the colors of the forest-top, — the rug, looking down on it.

Tufts of coarse grass [1] are in full bloom along the riverside, — little islets big enough to support a fisherman.

Again we scare up the herons, who, methinks, will build hereabouts. They were standing by the waterside. And again they alight farther below, and we see their light-colored heads erect, and their bodies at various angles as they stoop to drink. And again they flap away with their great slate-blue wings, necks curled up (?) and legs straight out behind, and, having

[1] *Carex stricta.*

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attained a great elevation, they circle back over our heads, now seemingly black as crows against the sky, — crows with long wings, they might be taken for, — but higher and higher they mount by stages in the sky, till heads and tails are lost and they are mere black wavelets amid the blue, one always following close behind the other. They are evidently mated. It would be worth the while if we could see them oftener in our sky.

Some apple trees are fairly out.

What is that small slate-colored hawk with black tips to wings?

May 15. *Sunday.* P. M. — To Annursnack.

Silvery cinquefoil now open. Its petals, perchance, show the green between them, but the beautiful under sides of the leaves more than make up for it. What was that bird beyond the Lee place, with a chickadee-like note, black head and throat, and light color round the neck and beneath; methinks longer and slenderer than the chickadee? The golden willow catkins begin to fall; their prime is past. And buttercups and silvery cinquefoil, and the first apple blossoms, and waving grass beginning to be tinged with sorrel, introduce us to a different season. The huckleberry, *resinosa*, its red flowers are open, in more favorable places several days earlier, probably; and the earliest shrub and red and black oaks in warm exposures may be set down to to-day. A red butterfly goes by. Methinks I have seen them before. The painted-cup is now abundantly and fully out. Six or eight inches high

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above its spidery leaves, almost like a red flame, it stands on edge of the hill just rising from the meadow, — on the instep of the hill. It tells of July with its fiery color. It promises a heat we have not experienced yet. This is a field which lies nearer to summer. Yellow is the color of spring; red, of midsummer. Through pale golden and green we arrive at the yellow of the buttercup; through scarlet, to the fiery July red, the red lily.

The first cricket's chirrup which I have chanced to hear now falls on my ear and makes me forget all else; all else is a thin and movable crust down to that depth where he resides eternally. He already foretells autumn. Deep under the dry border of some rock in this hillside he sits, and makes the finest singing of birds outward and insignificant, his own song is so much deeper and more significant. His voice has set me thinking, philosophizing, moralizing at once. It is not so wildly melodious, but it is wiser and more mature than that of the wood thrush. With this elixir I see clear through the summer now to autumn, and any summer work seems frivolous. I am disposed to ask this humblebee that hurries humming past so busily if he knows what he is about. At one leap I go from the just opened buttercup to the life-everlasting. This singer has antedated autumn. His strain is superior (inferior?) [1] to seasons. It annihilates time and space; the summer is for time-servers.

The *Erigeron bellidifolius* has now spread its rays out flat since last Sabbath. I may set it down to

[1] Exaltedly inferior.

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May 10th, methinks. It is the first of what I may call the daisy family, sometimes almost white. What are those large conical-shaped fungi of which I see a dozen round an apple tree? I thought them pieces of a yellowish wasp-nest, they are so honeycombed.

I looked again on the forest from this hill, which view may contrast with that of last Sunday. The mist produced by the leafing of the deciduous trees has greatly thickened now and lost much of its reddishness in the lighter green of expanding leaves, has become a brownish or yellowish green, except where it has attained distinctness in the light-green foliage of the birch, the earliest distinct foliage visible in *extensive great* masses at a great distance, the aspen not being common. The pines and other evergreens are now fast being merged in a sea of foliage.

The weather has grown rapidly warm. Methinks I wore a greatcoat here last Sunday; now an undercoat is too much. I even think of bathing in the river. I love to sit in the wind on this hill and be blown on. We bathe thus first in air; then, when the air has warmed it, in water.

Here are ten cows feeding on the hill beside me. Why do they move about so fast as they feed? They have advanced thirty rods in ten minutes, and sometimes the [last] one runs to keep up. Is it to give the grass thus a chance to grow more equally and always get a fresh bite? The tall buttercup on the west edge of Painted-Cup Meadow for a day or two at least, and the fringed polygala as long. This side stone bridge, *Barbarea vulgaris*, or common winter cress. yellow rocket,

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also as long. A thorn will blossom in a day or two, without varnished ashy twigs and with deep-cut lobes.

The following trees and shrubs methinks *leaf* out in nearly the following order. The more questionable, or which I have not seen, are marked — (?).

Gooseberry
Currant
Trembles
Some willows
Young white, red, and sugar maples
Balm-of-Gilead
Elder
Meadow-sweet
Diervilla
Black cherry
Ostrya
Alder
Paper birch
Black "
Yellow "
White "
Pyrus arbutifolia
Apple
Amelanchier
Choke cherry
Dwarf "
Wild red "
Viburnum nudum
" *Lentago*
Maple-leaved viburnum (?)
Barberry

Thorns
Waxwork
Maples (??)
Shrub oak
Chinquapin oak
Red "
Black "
Scarlet " (?)
Hazel
Larch
White pine
Elm
Hornbeam (??)
Cornels (some later ?)
Chestnut
Great-leaved poplar
Butternut
Hickories
Bass
Sassafras
Locust (?)
Celtis(?)
Pitch pine
Juniperus repens } (?)
Red cedar
White "
Arbor-vitæ
White oak

Swamp white oak
Chestnut oak
Hardhack (?)
Salix nigra
Grape
White ash
Black "
Sumach
Beech (?)
Swamp-pink
Witch-hazel } (?)
Nemopanthes }
Prinos
Clethra
Tupelo
Mountain laurel (??)
Panicled andromeda
Dwarf
Rhodora
Button-bush
Hemlock (?) ? (?)[1]
White spruce[1]
Black spruce[1]

The above list made May 20th.

[1] Seen a day or two after the button-bush started. The hemlock appeared later, but it may [be] because it is of slower growth.

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May 16. E. Hoar saw the henbit (*Lamium amplexicaule*) a week ago from Mr. Pritchard's garden. Celandine is out a day or more, and rhodora, trillium, and yellow violets yesterday at least. Horse-chestnut to-day. What handsome long yellow, threadlike peduncles to the staminate flowers of the sugar maple! three inches long, tassel-like, appearing with the leaves.

A man is about town with a wagon-load of the *Rhododendron maximum* this evening from Gardiner, Maine. It is well budded; buds nearly an inch long; long, narrow, thick leaves, six inches long or more. He says it means the "rose of Dendrum" and will grow from a mere slip cut off and stuck in any soil, — only water it three times a day! ! ! No doubt of it.

It has been oppressively warm to-day, the first really warm, sultry-like weather, so that we were prepared for a thunder-storm at evening. At 5 P. M., dark, heavy, wet-looking clouds are seen in the northern horizon, perhaps over the Merrimack Valley, and we say it is going down the river and we shall not get a drop. The main body goes by, there is a shower in the north, and the western sky is suffused with yellow where its thin skirts are withdrawing. People stand at their doors in the warm evening, listening to the muttering of distant thunder and watching the forked lightning, now descending to the earth, now ascending to the clouds. This the first really warm day and thunder-shower. Had thunder-shower while I was in Haverhill in April. Nature appears to have passed a crisis. All slimy reptile life is wide awake. The sprayey dream of the

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toad has a new sound; from the meadow the hylodes are heard more distinctly; and the tree-toad chirrups often from the elms (?). The sultry warmth and moister air has called him into life. We smell the fresher and cooler air from where the storm has passed. And now that it has grown dark, the skirts of the cloud seem to promise us a shower. It lightens incessantly right in the west; the right wing of the rear guard of the storm is steadily advancing and firing, and every flash shows the outlines of the cloud. We look out into the dark, and ever and anon comes a sudden illumination blinding our eyes, like a vast glow-worm, succeeded ere long by the roll of thunder. The first pattering of drops is heard; all west windows are hastily shut. The weak-eyed sit with their backs to windows and close the blinds. But we are disappointed, after all, and each flash reveals a narrow strip of evening red through the thin drops below the advancing cloud.

May 17. 5 A. M. — To Island by boat.

Everything has sensibly advanced during the warm and moist night. Some trees, as the small maples in the street, already look verdurous. The air has not sensibly cooled much. The chimney swallows are busily skimming low over the river and just touching the water without regard to me, as a week ago they did, and as they circle back overhead to repeat the experiment, I hear a sharp snap or short rustling of their wings. The button-bush now shows the first signs of life, on a close inspection, in its small round, smooth, greenish buds. The polygonums and pontederias are getting

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above water, the latter like spoons on long handles. The *Cornus florida* is blossoming; will be fairly out to-day.[1] The *Polygonatum pubescens;* one on the Island has just opened. This is the smaller Solomon's-seal. A thorn there will blossom to-day. The *Viola palmata* is out there, in the meadow. Everywhere the huckleberry's sticky leaves are seen expanding, and the *high blueberry* is in blossom. Now is the time to admire the very young and tender leaves. The blossoms of the red oak hang down under its young leaves as under a canopy. The petals have already fallen from the *Amelanchier Botryapium*, and young berries are plainly forming. I hear the wood pewee, — *pe-a-wai.* The heat of yesterday has brought him on.

P. M. — To Corner Spring and Fair Haven Cliffs.

Myosotis laxa is out a day or two. At first does not run; is short and upright like *M. stricta.* Golden senecio will be out by to-morrow at least. The early cinquefoil is now in its prime and spots the banks and hillsides and dry meadows with its dazzling yellow. How lively! It is one of the most interesting yellow flowers. The fields are also now whitened, perhaps as much as ever, with the houstonia. The buckbean is out, apparently to-day, the singularly fuzzy-looking blossom. How inconspicuous its leaves now! The rhodora is peculiar for being, like the peach, a profusion of pink blossoms on a leafless stem. This shrub is, then, a late one to leaf out. The bobolink skims by before the wind how far without motion

[1] Involucre not spread and true flowers not open till about May 20th.

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of his wings! sometimes borne sidewise as he turns his head — for thus he can fly — and tinkling, *linking*, incessantly all the way. How very beautiful, like the fairest flowers, the young black oak shoots with leaves an inch long now! like red velvet on one side and downy white on the other, with only a red edge. Compare this with the pinker white oak. The *Salix nigra* just in bloom. The trientalis, properly called star-flower, is a white star, single, double, or treble. The fringed polygala surprises us in meadows or in low woods as a rarer, richer, and more delicate color, with a singularly tender or delicate-looking leaf. As you approach midsummer, the color of flowers is more intense and fiery. The reddest flower is the flower especially. Our blood is not white, nor is it yellow, nor even blue. The nodding trillium has apparently been out a day or two. Methinks it smells like the lady's-slipper. Also the *Ranunculus recurvatus* for a day or two. The small two or three leaved Solomon's-seal is just out. The *Viola cucullata* is sometimes eight inches high, and leaves in proportion. It must be the largest of the violets except perhaps the yellow. The *V. blanda* is almost entirely out of bloom at the spring.

Returning toward Fair Haven, I perceive at Potter's fence the first whiff of that ineffable fragrance from the Wheeler meadow, — as it were the promise of strawberries, pineapples, etc., in the aroma of their flowers, so blandly sweet, — aroma that fitly foreruns the summer and the autumn's most delicious fruits. It would certainly restore all such sick as could

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be conscious of it. The odors of no garden are to be named with it. It is wafted from the garden of gardens. It appears to blow from the river meadow from the west or southwest, here about forty rods wide or more. If the air here always possessed this bland sweetness, this spot would become famous and be visited by sick and well from all parts of the earth. It would be carried off in bottles and become an article of traffic which kings would strive to monopolize. The air of Elysium cannot be more sweet.

Cardamine hirsuta out some time by the ivy tree. The *Viola lanceolata* seems to pass into the *cucullata* insensibly, but can that small round-leaved white violet now so abundantly in blossom in open low ground be the same with that large round-leaved one now about out of blossom in shady low ground? *Arabis rhomboidea* just out by the willow on the Corner causeway. The *Ranunculus repens* perhaps yesterday, with its spotted leaves and its not recurved calyx though furrowed stem. Was that a very large *Veronica serpyllifolia* by the Corner Spring? Who shall keep with the lupines? They will apparently blossom within a week under Fair Haven. The *Viola sagittata*, of which *Viola ovata* is made a variety, is now very marked there. The *V. pedata* there presents the greatest array of blue of any flower as yet. The flowers are so raised above their leaves, and so close together, that they make a more indelible impression of blue on the eye; it is almost dazzling. I blink as I look at them, they seem to reflect the blue rays so forcibly, with a slight tinge of lilac. To be sure,

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there is no telling what the redder *ovata* might not do if they grew as densely, so many eyes or scales of blue side by side, forming small shields of that color four or five inches in diameter. The effect and intensity is very much increased by the numbers.

I hear the first unquestionable nighthawk squeak and see him circling far off high above the earth. It is now about 5 o'clock P. M. The tree-toads are heard in the rather moist atmosphere, as if presaging rain. I hear the dumping sound of bull(?)frogs, telling the weather is warm. The paddocks, as if too lazy to be disturbed, say now to the intruder, "don't, don't, don't, don't;" also in the morning after the first sultry night.

The chinquapin oak may be said to flower and leave out at the same time with the *ilicifolia*. It is distinguished as well by its yellow catkins as by its leaves. *Pyrus arbutifolia* is out, to-day or yesterday. A crataegus just out.

I sit now on a rock on the west slope of Fair Haven orchard, an hour before sunset, this warm, almost sultry evening, the air filled with the sweetness of apple blossoms (this is blossom week), — or I think it is mainly that meadow fragrance still, — the sun partly concealed behind a low cloud in the west, the air cleared by last evening's thunder-shower, the river now beautifully smooth (though a warm, bland breeze blows up here), full of light and reflecting the placid western sky and the dark woods which overhang it. I was surprised, on turning round, to behold the serene and everlasting beauty of the world, it was so soothing.

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I saw that I could not go home to supper and lose it. It was so much fairer, serener, more beautiful, than my mood had been. The fields beyond the river have unexpectedly a smooth, lawn-like beauty, and in beautiful curves sweep round the edge of the woods. The rapidly expanding foliage of the deciduous [trees] (last evening's rain or moisture has started them) lights up with a lively yellow green the dark pines which we have so long been used to. Some patches (I speak of woods half a mile or more off) are a lively green, some gray or reddish-gray still, where white oaks stand. With the stillness of the air comes the stillness of the water. The sweetest singers among the birds are heard more distinctly now, as the reflections are seen more distinctly in the water, — the veery constantly now. Methinks this serene, ambrosial beauty could hardly have been but for last evening's thundershower, which, to be sure, barely touched us, but cleared the air and gave a start to vegetation. The elm on the opposite side of the river has now a thin but dark verdure, almost as dark as the pines, while, as I have said, the prevailing color of the deciduous woods is a light yellowish and sunny green. The woods rarely if ever present a more beautiful aspect from afar than now. Methinks the black oak at early leafing is more red than the red oak. Ah, the beauty of this last hour of the day — when a power stills the air and smooths all waters and all minds — that partakes of the light of the day and the stillness of the night!

Sit on Cliffs. The Shrub Oak Plain, where are so

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many young white oaks, is now a faint rose-color, almost like a distant peach orchard in bloom and seen against sere red ground. What might at first be taken for the color of some sere leaves and bare twigs still left, its tender red expanding leaves. You might say of the white oaks and of many black oaks at least, "When the oaks are in the red." The perfect smoothness of Fair Haven Pond, full of light and reflecting the wood so distinctly, while still occasionally the sun shines warm and brightly from behind a cloud, giving the completest contrast of sunshine and shade, is enough to make this hour memorable. The red pincushion gall is already formed on the new black oak leaves, with little grubs in them, and the leaves, scarcely more than two inches long, are already attacked by other foes.

Looking down from these rocks, the black oak has a very light hoary or faint silvery color; the white oak, though much less advanced, has a yet more hoary color; but the red oaks (as well as the hickories) have a lively, glossy aspen green, a shade lighter than the birch now, and their long yellowish catkins appear further advanced than the black. Some black as well as white oaks are reddish still.

The new shoots now color the whole of the juniper (creeping) with a light yellow tinge. It appears to be just in blossom,[1] and those little green berries must be already a year old; and, as it is called dicœcious, these must be the fertile blossoms. This must be *Krigia Virginica* now budded, close by the juniper,

[1] [This is queried in pencil.]

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and will blossom in a day or two.[1] The low blackberry, apparently, on Cliffs is out, earlier than elsewhere, and *Veronica arvensis* (?), very small, obscure pale-blue flower, and, to my surprise, *Linaria Canadensis*.

Returning slowly, I sit on the wall of the orchard by the white pine. Now the cows begin to low, and the river reflects the golden light of the sun just before his setting. The sough of the wind in the pines is more noticeable, as if the air were otherwise more still and hollow. The wood thrush has sung for some time. He touches a depth in me which no other bird's song does. He has learned to sing, and no thrumming of the strings or tuning disturbs you. Other birds may whistle pretty well, but he is the master of a finer-toned instrument. His song is musical, not from association merely, not from variety, but the character of its tone. It is all divine, — a Shakespeare among birds, and a Homer too. This sweetness of the air, does it not always first succeed a thunder-storm? Is it not a general sweetness, and not to be referred to a particular plant?

He who cuts down woods beyond a certain limit exterminates birds. How red are the scales of some hickory buds, now turned back! The fragrance of the apple blossom reminds me of a pure and innocent and unsophisticated country girl bedecked for church. The purple sunset is reflected from the surface of the river, as if its surface were tinged with *lake*. Here is a field sparrow that varies his strain very sweetly.

[1] Out on Nobscot the 22d.

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Coming home from Spring by Potter's Path to the Corner road in the dusk, saw a dead-leaf-colored hylodes; detected it by its expanding and relapsing bubble, nearly twice as big as its head, as it sat on an alder twig six inches from ground and one rod from a pool.

The beach plum is out to-day.[1] The whip-poor-will sings. Large insects now fly at night. This is a somewhat sultry night. We must begin now to look out for insects about the candles. The lilac out.

Genius rises above nature; in spite of heat, in spite of cold, works and lives.

May 18. The rhodora is one of the very latest-leafing shrubs, for its leaf-buds are but just expanding, making scarcely any show yet, but quite leafless amid the blossoms. The *Celtis occidentalis* in bloom, maybe a day. Its shoots have grown two inches. It is as forward as the hickory at least; more than the elm. A red clover in blossom. A geranium budded; will open in a day or two. Surprised to see a *Ranunculus Purshii* open. A choke-cherry blossomed in a tumbler yesterday,[2] and probably outdoors.

Finding the *Linaria Canadensis* yesterday at the Cliffs on a very close search for flowers makes me think that, by looking very carefully in the most favored and warmest localities, you may find most flowers out some weeks even in advance of the rest of their kind.

[1] Apparently same with that by red house and Jenny Dugan's and probably not beach plum.

[2] On Island, May 20th.

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We have had no storm this spring thus far, but it mizzles to-night. Perchance a May storm is brewing. This day it has mizzled, — as it were a dewy atmosphere, through which for the most part the sun shines. Methinks this is common at this season of the tender foliage, which requires a moist air and protection against the sun.

A singular effect produced by a mass of ferns at a little distance, some rods square, their light yellow-green tops seen above the dark masses of their fruit. At first one is puzzled to account for it. White ash fully in bloom.

May 19. Thunder-showers in the night, and it still storms, with holdings-up. A May storm, gentle and rather warm. The days of the golden willow are over for this season; their withered catkins strew the causeways and cover the water and also my boat, which is moored beneath them. The locust has grown three inches and is blossom-budded. It may come just after the white ash at least, and before the celtis. The weather toward evening still cloudy and somewhat mizzling. The foliage of the young maples, elms, etc., in the street has become, since the rain commenced, several shades darker, changing from its tender and lighter green, as if the electricity of the thunder-storm may have had some effect on it. It is best observed while it is still cloudy; almost a bluish, no longer yellowish green, it is peculiarly rich. The very grass appears to have undergone a similar change.

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May 20. The 18th and 19th a rather gentle and warm May storm, — more rain, methinks, than we have had before this spring at one time. Began with thunder-showers on the night of the 18th, the flashing van of the storm, followed by the long, dripping main body, with, at very long intervals, an occasional firing or skirmishing in the rear or on the flanks.

6 A. M. — To Island by river.

Probably a red-wing blackbird's nest, of grass, hung between two button-bushes; whitish eggs with irregular black marks. Sarsaparilla (*Aralia nudicaulis*), probably two days. White oak, swamp white, and chestnut oak probably will open by the 22d.

The white ashes are in full flower now, and how long?

8 A. M. — To Flint's Pond.

Cornus Canadensis just out. Probably the *C. florida* should be set down to-day, since it just begins to shed pollen and its involucre is more open. It is a fair but cool and windy day, a strong northwest wind, and the grass, to which the rain has given such a start, conspicuously waves, showing its lighter under side, and the buttercups toss in the wind. The pitch and white pines have grown from one to five inches.

On Pine Hill. — In this clear morning light and a strong wind from the northwest, the mountains in the horizon, seen against some low, thin clouds in the background, look darker and more like earth than usual; you distinguish forest and pasture on them. This in the clear, cool atmosphere in the morning after

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a rain-storm, with the wind northwest. They will grow more ethereal, melting into the sky, as the day advances.

The beech is already one of the most densely clothed trees, or rather makes a great show of verdure from the size of its fully expanded light-green leaves, though some are later. The fresh shoots on low branches are five or six inches long. It is an interesting tree to me, with its neat, close, tight-looking bark, like the dress which athletes wear, its bare instep, and roots beginning to branch like bird's feet, showing how it is planted and holds by the ground. Not merely stuck in the ground like a stick. It gives the beholder the same pleasure that it does to see the timbers of a house above and around. Do they blossom here? I found nuts, but apparently not sound, at Haverhill the other day, — last year's. There are some slender, perfectly horizontal limbs which go zigzagging, as it were creeping through the air, only two or three feet above the ground, over the side-hill, as if they corresponded to concealed rills in the ground beneath.

Plenty of arums now in bloom. Probably my earliest one was in bloom, for I did not look within it. What is that pretty, transparent moss in the brooks, which holds the rain or dewdrops so beautifully on the under sides of the leafets, through which they sparkle crystallinely? Fresh checkerberry shoots now. The cedars are full of yellowish cedar apples and minute berries just formed, the effete staminiferous blossom still on. When did they begin to bloom? I find none of the rare hedyotis yet on Bare Hill. The peach bloom is

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now gone and the apple bloom come. Heard the seringo note, like a rattling watch-spring, from a flock passing swiftly overhead.

The wind makes such a din in the woods that the notes of birds are lost, and added to this is the sound of the waves of Flint's Pond breaking on the shore, — the fresh surf. The pond is spotted with whitecaps, five or six feet long by one foot, like a thin flock of sheep running toward the southeast shore. The smallest lakes can be lashed into a sort of fury by the wind, and are quite ocean-like then. These caps are a striving to dilute the water with air.

The barberry will probably blossom to-day.

Here, by the side of the pond, a fire has recently run through the young woods on the hillside. It is surprising how clean it has swept the ground, only the very lowest and dampest rotten leaves remaining, but uvularias and smilacinas have pushed up here and there conspicuously on the black ground, a foot high. At first you do not observe the full effect of the fire, walking amid the bare dead or dying trees, which wear a perfect winter aspect, which, as trees generally are not yet fully leaved out and you are still used to this, you do not notice, till you look up and see the still green tops everywhere above the height of fifteen feet. Yet the trees do not bear many marks of fire commonly; they are but little blackened except where the fire has run a few feet up a birch, or paused at a dry stump, or a young evergreen has been killed and reddened by it and is now dropping a shower of red leaves.

Hemlock will blossom to-morrow. The geranium is

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just out, and the lady's-slipper. Some with old seed-vessels are still seen.

Hear again, what I have heard for a week or more sometimes, that rasping, springy note, a very hoarse chirp, — *ooh, twee twee twee,* — from a bluish bird as big as a bluebird, with some bright yellow about head, white beneath and lateral tail-feathers, and black cheeks (?). This and that sort of brown-creeper-like bird — of May 12 — and the chickadee-like bird (which may be the chickadee), and the *ah te ter twee* of deep pine woods (which also may be the chickadee), I have not identified.

Arbor-vitæ has been out some time and the butternut some days. Mountain-ash on the 18th. Larch apparently ten days. Nemopanthes several days. The swamp blueberry abundantly out.

Saw a tanager in Sleepy Hollow. It most takes the eye of any bird. You here have the red-wing reversed, — the deepest scarlet of the red-wing spread over the whole body, not on the wing-coverts merely, while the wings are black. It flies through the green foliage as if it would ignite the leaves.

Of deciduous trees and shrubs, the latest to leaf out, as I find by observation to-day, must be the panicled andromeda, rhodora, and button-bush. In some places, however, the first has perfectly formed leaves, the rhodora at most not half unfolded, the button-bush for the most part just bursting buds. But I have not seen the prinos and perhaps one or two other shrubs. I have no doubt that the button-bush may be called the latest of all.

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Is that female ash by river at Lee's Hill a new kind? In bloom fully May 18th.

Even this remote forest, which stands so far away and innocent, has this terrible foe Fire to fear. Lightning may ignite a dead tree or the dry leaves, and in a few minutes a green forest be blackened and killed. This liability to accident from which no part of nature is exempt.

Plucked to-day a bunch of *Viola pedata*, consisting of four divisions or offshoots around a central or fifth root, all *united* and about one inch in diameter at the ground and four inches at top.

		Flowers	Buds
1st	division contained	10	5
2d	" "	11	4
3d	" "	9	4
4th	" "	8	4
5th	" "	11	5
		49	22

And perhaps more buds would still make their appearance, and undoubtedly half a dozen more would have blown the next day. Forming a complex, close little testudo of violet scales above their leaves.

May 21. P. M. — Up Assabet to cress, with Sophia.

Land on Island. One of the most beautiful things to me now is the reddish-ash, and, higher, the silvery, canopies of half a dozen young white oak leaves over their catkins, — thousands of little tents pitched in the air for the May training of the flowers, so many

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little parasols to their tenderer flowers. Young white oaks and shrub oaks have a reddish look quite similar to their *withered* leaves in the winter.

It is still windy weather, and while I hear the bobolink strain dying away in the distance through the maples, I can [*sic*] the falling apple blossoms which I do not see, as if they were his falling notes. Yet the water is quite still and smooth by the Hemlocks, and as the weather is warm, it is a soothing sight to see it covered with dust there over the Deep Eddy.

Landed beyond the grape-vine bower and cleared out the spring of leaves and sticks and mud, and deepened it, making an outlet, and it soon ran clear and cold. The cress, which proves to be the rock cress, or herb of St. Barbara, is now luxuriant and in bloom in many places along the river, looking like mustard.

Found the *Ranunculus abortivus*, apparently some time in blossom, in the woods opposite to the cress. Put it after the *repens*.

There are, apparently, two kinds of thorns close together on Nawshawtuct, — one now and for some days in blossom, both bushes and the largest tree, — which are evidently varieties of the *Cratægus coccinea*, or scarlet-fruited thorn. The tree one is about eleven feet high by ten feet, and would be taken for an apple tree; is crowded full with white bloom very compact and handsome; the most showy of any native tree in these parts when in bloom. Its thorns are stout. But there is another kind, thin, wisp-shaped trees, not yet in bloom, with very long, slender, straight needle-shaped thorns and two or three stipules to each peduncle. As

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it has the usual petioles, is not the cockspur, but may be a variety of the first-named.

The grass begins to be conspicuously reddened with sorrel. The white maple keys are nearly two inches long by a half-inch wide, in pairs, with waved inner edges like green moths ready to bear off their seeds.[1] The red maple keys are not half so large now, and are a dull red, of a similar form. The hickories are budded and show the red anthers.

May 22. *Sunday*: To Nobscot with W. E. C.

This is the third windy day following the two days' rain. A washing day, such as we always have at this season, methinks. The grass has sprung up as by magic since the rains. The birds are heard through the pleasant dashing wind, which enlivens everything.

It is clear June, the first day of summer. The rye, which, when I last looked, was one foot high, is now three feet high and waving and tossing its heads in the wind. We ride by these bluish-green waving rye-fields in the woods, as if an Indian juggler had made them spring up in a night. Why, the sickle and cradle will soon be taken up. Though I walk every day I am never prepared for this magical growth of the rye. I am advanced by whole months, as it were, into summer. Sorrel reddens the fields. Cows are preparing the milk for June butter. Already the falling apple blossoms fill the air and spot the roads and fields, and some are already turned dark with decay on the ground. With this warmth and wind the air is full of haze, such

[1] *Vide* May 29, 1854.

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as we have not had before. The lilac is scented at every house. The wood pewee's warm note is heard. We ride through warm, sandy shrub oak roads, where the *Viola pedata* blues the edge of the path, and the sand cherry and the choke-cherry whiten it. The crickets now first are generally heard. Houstonias whiten the fields and are now in their prime. The thorn bushes are full of bloom. Observed a *large* sassafras tree in bloom, — a rich lemon (?) yellow.

Left our horse at the Howe tavern. The oldest date on the sign is "D. H. 1716." An old woman, who had been a servant in the family and said she was ninety-one, said this was the first house built on the spot. Went on to Nobscot. Very warm in the woods, — and hear the hoarse note of the tanager and the sweet *pe-a-wai*, — but pleasantly breezy on the bare hilltops. Can't see the mountains. Found an abundance of the *Viola Muhlenbergii* [1] (*debilis* of Bigelow), a stalked violet, pale blue and bearded.

The krigia out, a redder, more July, yellow than the dandelion; also a yellow Bethlehem-star and ribwort; and the mountain cranberry still here and there in blossom, though for the most part small berries formed. An abundance of saxifrage going to seed, and in their midst two or three looking densely white like the pearly everlasting — round dense white heads, apparently an abortion, an abnormal state, without stamens, etc., which I cannot find described.

The pastures on this hill and its spurs are sprinkled profusely with thorny pyramidal apple scrubs, very

[1] Also Holden farm and Pinxter-Flower Brook.

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thick and stubborn, first planted by the cows, then browsed by them and kept down stubborn and thorny for years, till, as they spread, their centre is protected and beyond reach and shoots up into a tree, giving a wine-glass form to the whole; and finally perchance the bottom disappears and cows come in to stand in the shade and rub against and redden the trunk. They must make fine dark shadows, these shrubs, when the sun is low; perfectly pyramidal they are now, many of them. You see the cow-dung everywhere now with a hundred little trees springing up in it. Thus the cows create their own shade and food.[1]

This hill, Nobscot, is the summit of the island (?) or cape between the Assabet and Musketaquid — perhaps the best point from which to view the Concord River valley. The Wayland hills bound it on the east; Berlin, Bolton, [and] Harvard hills on the west. The Sudbury meadows, seen here and there in distance, are of a peculiar bluish green. This is the first truly lively *summer* Sunday, what with lilacs, warm weather, waving rye, slight[ly] dusty sandy roads in some places, falling apple blossoms, etc., etc., and the wood pewee. The country people walk so quietly to church, and at five o'clock the farmer stands reading the newspaper while his cows go through the bars. I ought perhaps to have measured the great white oak by Howe's. A remarkably thick white pine wood this side of Willis's Pond!!

When yesterday Sophia and I were rowing past Mr. Prichard's land, where the river is bordered by a

[1] [See *Excursions*, p. 305; Riv. 374, 375.]

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row of elms and low willows, at 6 P. M., we heard a singular note of distress as it were from a catbird — a loud, vibrating, catbird sort of note, as if the catbird's mew were imitated by a smart vibrating spring. Blackbirds and others were flitting about, apparently attracted by it. At first, thinking it was merely some peevish catbird or red-wing, I was disregarding it, but on second thought turned the bows to the shore, looking into the trees as well as over the shore, thinking some bird might be in distress, caught by a snake or in a forked twig. The hovering birds dispersed at my approach; the note of distress sounded louder and nearer as I approached the shore covered with low osiers. The sound came from the ground, not from the trees. I saw a little black animal making haste to meet the boat under the osiers. A young musk-rat? a mink? No, it was a little dot of a kitten. It was scarcely six inches long from the face to the base — or I might as well say the tip — of the tail, for the latter was a short, sharp pyramid, perfectly perpendicular but not swelled in the least. It was a very handsome and very precocious kitten, in perfectly good condition, its breadth being considerably more than one third of its length. Leaving its mewing, it came scrambling over the stones as fast as its weak legs would permit, straight to me. I took it up and dropped it into the boat, but while I was pushing off it ran the length of the boat to Sophia, who held it while we rowed homeward. Evidently it had not been weaned — was smaller than we remembered that kittens ever were — almost infinitely small; yet it had hailed a

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boat, its life being in danger, and saved itself. Its performance, considering its age and amount of experience, was more wonderful than that of any young mathematician or musician that I have read of. Various were the conjectures as to how the kitten came there, a quarter of a mile from a house. The possible solutions were finally reduced to three: first, it must either have been born there, or, secondly, carried there by its mother, or, thirdly, by human hands. In the first case, it had possibly brothers and sisters, one or both, and its mother had left them to go a-hunting on her own account and might be expected back. In the second, she might equally be expected to return. At any rate, not having thought of all this till we got home, we found that we had got ourselves into a scrape; for this kitten, though exceedingly interesting, required one nurse to attend it constantly for the present, and, of course, another to spell the first; and, beside, we had already a cat well-nigh grown, who manifested such a disposition toward the young stranger that we had no doubt it would have torn it in pieces in a moment if left alone with it. As nobody made up his or her mind to have it drowned, and still less to drown it, — having once looked into its innocent extremely pale blue eyes (as of milk thrice skimmed) and had his finger or his chin sucked by it, while, its eyes being shut, its little paws played a soothing tune, — it was resolved to keep it till it could be suitably disposed of. It rested nowhere, in no lap, under no covert, but still faintly cried for its mother and its accustomed supper. It ran toward every sound

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or movement of a human being, and whoever crossed the room it was sure to follow at a rapid pace. It had all the ways of a cat of the maturest years; could purr divinely and raised its back to rub all boots and shoes. When it raised its foot to scratch its ear, which by the way it never hit, it was sure to fall over and roll on the floor. It climbed straight up the sitter, faintly mewing all the way, and sucked his chin. In vain, at first, its head was bent down into saucers of milk which its eyes did not see, and its chin was wetted. But soon it learned to suck a finger that had been dipped in it, and better still a rag; and then at last it slept and rested. The street was explored in vain to find its owner, and at length an Irish family took it into their cradle. Soon after we learned that a neighbor who had heard the mewing of kittens in the partition had sent for a carpenter, taken off a board, and found two the very day at noon that we sailed. That same hour it was first brought to the light a coarse Irish cook had volunteered to drown it, had carried it to the river, and without bag or sinker had cast it in! It saved itself and hailed a boat! What an eventful life! What a precocious kitten! We feared it owed its first plump condition to the water. How strong and effective the instinct of self-preservation!

Our quince blossomed yesterday. Saw many low blackberries in bloom to-day.

May 23. P. M. — To Ministerial Swamp.

The poet must bring to Nature the smooth mirror in which she is to be reflected. He must be something

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superior to her, something more than natural. He must furnish equanimity. No genius will excuse him from importing the ivory which is to be his material.

That small veronica (*V. arvensis*) by Mrs. Hosmer's is the same with that on the Cliffs; there is also the smooth or *V. serpyllifolia* by her path at the brook. This is the fifth windy day. A May wind — a washing wind. Do we not always have after the early thunder-showers a May storm? The first windy weather which it is agreeable to walk or ride in — creating a lively din. That must be the *Arenaria serpyllifolia*, thyme-leaved sandwort, now for some days (weeks?) out on the Clamshell Hill. Put it with viscid myosotis. To-day I am surprised by the dark orange-yellow of the senecio. At first we had the lighter, paler spring yellows of willows (cowslips even, for do they not grow a little darker afterward?), dandelion, cinquefoil, then the darker (methinks it is a little darker than the cowslip) and deeper yellow of the buttercup; and then this broad distinction between the buttercup and the krigia and senecio, as the seasons revolve toward July. Every new flower that opens, no doubt, expresses a new mood of the human mind. Have I any dark or ripe orange-yellow thoughts to correspond? The *flavor* of my thoughts begins to correspond. Lupines now for some days, probably about the 19th. Whiteweed will open perhaps to-morrow or next day. For some time dandelions and mouse-ear have been seen gone to seed — autumnal sights. I have not yet seen a white oak (and put with it swamp white and chestnut) fairly in bloom.

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The 20th, when at Flint's Pond I raked away the leaves for acorns, I found many dor-bugs either just ready to issue forth or which had taken refuge from the storm.

The geum is out, maybe one day.

As I rise the hill beyond Geum Meadow I perceive the sweet fragrance of the season from over the turf; as if the vales were vast saucers full of strawberries, as if our walks were on the rim of such a saucer. With this, couple the fact that directly the fresh shoots of the firs and spruces will have the fragrance of strawberries. White clover. I see the light purple of the rhodora enlivening the edges of swamps — another color the sun wears. It is a beautiful shrub seen afar, and makes a great show from the abundance of its bloom unconcealed by leaves, rising above the andromeda. Is it not the most showy *high-colored* flower or shrub? Flowers are the different colors of the sunlight.

Saw a great silvery-grayish cocoon, perchance of an emperor moth, on a scrub apple six inches from the ground, reminding me of a hornet's or wasp's nest — the great silk bag — two and one half inches long by nearly two inches, with a hole by which, apparently, the perfect insect had flown. What a rich stuff the shining silky, silvery bag!

At the Ministerial Swamp I find the spruce leaf-buds have not yet burst their envelopes except at the tops of the trees where they have pushed out and are perfect handsome cones containing a bundle of leaves. The large staminate blossoms are now dry and effete, and the young cones more than one half inch long.

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Perhaps they should come between the red cedar and the larch. Put the first the last of May; the spruce, both white and black, end of the first week of May, and larch directly after, till I know better. It is glorious to stand in the midst of the andromeda, which so level and thick fills the swamp, and look up at the blue spruce trees. The edges of the scales of the young cones, which are at the tops of the trees (where the branches make light and open crosses), seen against the sunlit sky or against the light merely, being transparent, are a splendid crimson color, as if the condensed fire of all sunsets were reflected from them, like the richest damask or ruby-throated hummingbird's breast. They glow with the crimson fires of the sunset sky, reflected over the swamp — unspeakably rare and precious rubies as you thus look up at them; but climb the tree and look down on them, and they are comparatively dull and opaque. These are the rubies of the swamp. Already the just bursting leaf-buds emit that rare strawberry fragrance. It is one of the most glowing, beautiful, brilliant effects in nature, exactly like the reflections from the breast of the ruby-throated hummingbird; as if a hundred ruby-throated hummingbirds sat on the topmost crosses of the trees, their breasts turned to the sun. The dwarf andromeda is for the most part just prepared to leave out, though some twigs have grown an inch.

How different the ramrod jingle of the chewink or any bird's note sounds now at 5 P. M. in the cooler, stiller air, when also the humming of insects is more distinctly heard, and perchance some impurity has

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begun to sink to earth strained by the air. Or is it, perchance, to be referred to the cooler, more clarified and pensive state of the mind, when dews have begun to descend in it and clarify it? Chaste eve! A certain lateness in the sound, pleasing to hear, which releases me from the obligation to return in any particular season. I have passed the Rubicon of staying out. I have said to myself, that way is not homeward; I will wander further from what I have called my home — to the home which is forever inviting me. In such an hour the freedom of the woods is offered me, and the birds sing my dispensation. In dreams the links of life are united: we forget that our friends are dead; we know them as of old.

An abundance of pure white fringed polygalas, very delicate, by the path at Harrington's mud-hole. Thus many flowers have their nun sisters, dressed in white. At Loring's Wood heard and saw a tanager. That contrast of a *red* bird with the green pines and the blue sky! Even when I have heard his note and look for him and find the bloody fellow, sitting on a dead twig of a pine, I am always startled. (They seem to love the darkest and thickest pines.) That incredible red, with the green and blue, as if these were the trinity we wanted. Yet with his hoarse note he pays for his color. I am transported; these are not the woods I ordinarily walk in. He sunk Concord in his thought. How he enhances the wildness and wealth of the woods! This and the emperor moth make the tropical phenomena of our zone. There is warmth in the pewee's strain, but this bird's colors and his note tell of Brazil.

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Even in remotest woods the trivial noon has its rule and its limit. When the chaste and pensive eve draws on, suddenly the walker begins to reflect.

When I listened this evening at the door, I heard no hylodes;[1] but methinks I did hear toads on the river, — unless they were frogs.[2]

May 24. The smooth speedwell is in its prime now, whitening the sides of the back road, above the Swamp Bridge and front of Hubbard's. Its sweet little pansy-like face looks up on all sides. This and the *Myosotis laxa* are the two most beautiful *little* flowers yet, if I remember rightly.

P. M. — Talked, or tried to talk, with R. W. E. Lost my time — nay, almost my identity. He, assuming a false opposition where there was no difference of opinion, talked to the wind — told me what I knew — and I lost my time trying to imagine myself somebody else to oppose him.

The wild pink was out day before yesterday.

May 25. *Wednesday.* Election day. — Rain yesterday afternoon and to-day. Heard the popping of guns last night and this morning, nevertheless.

I quarrel with most botanists' description of different species, say of willows. It is a difference without a distinction. No stress is laid upon the peculiarity of the species in question, and it requires a very careful examination and comparison to detect any difference in the description. Having described you one species, he begins

[1] Heard a few next evening, also the 27th. [2] *Vide* May 30th.

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again at the beginning when he comes to the next and describes it *absolutely*, wasting time; in fact does not describe the species, but rather the genus or family; as if, in describing the particular races of men, you should say of each in its turn that it is but dust and to dust it shall return. The object should be to describe not those particulars in which a species resembles its genus, for they are many and that would be but a negative description, but those in which it is peculiar, for they are few and positive.

Steady fisherman's rain, without wind, straight down, flooding the ground and spattering on it, beating off the blossoms of apples and thorns, etc. Within the last week or so the grass and leaves have grown many shades darker, and if we had leaped from last Wednesday to this, we should have been startled by the change — the dark bluish green of rank grass especially. How rapidly the young twigs shoot — the herbs, trees, shrubs no sooner leaf out than they shoot forward surprisingly, as if they had acquired a head by being repressed so long. The[y] do not grow nearly so rapidly at any [other] season. Many do most of their growing for the year in a week or two at this season. They *shoot* — they *spring* — and the rest of the year they harden and mature, and perhaps have a second spring in the latter part of summer or in the fall. The hedge-mustard is just out.

Two young men who borrowed my boat the other day returned from the riverside through Channing's yard, quietly. It was almost the only way for them. But, as they passed out his gate, C. boorishly walked

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out his house behind them in his shirt-sleeves, and shut his gate again behind them as if to shut them out. It was just that sort of behavior which, if he had met with it in Italy or France, he would have complained of, whose meanness he would have condemned.

May 26. P. M. — To Lee's Cliff.

No breaking away, but the clouds have ceased to drop rain awhile and the birds are very lively. The waters are dark, and our attention is confined to earth. Saw two striped snakes deliberately drop from the stone bank wall into the river at Hubbard's Bridge and remain under water while we looked. Do not perceive the meadow fragrance in this wet weather. A high blueberry bush by roadside beyond the bridge very full of blossoms. It has the more florid and blossoming effect because the leaves are few and quite distinct, or standing out from the flowers — the countless inverted white mugs (in rows and everywhere as on counters or shelves) with their peculiar green calyxes. If there are as many berries as blossoms we shall fare well.

Now is the time to walk in low, damp maple copses and see the tender, luxuriant foliage that has pushed up, mushroom-like, before the sun has come to harden it — the ferns of various species and in various stages, some now in their most perfect and beautiful condition, completely unfolded, tender and delicate, but perfect in all their details, far more than any lace work — the most elaborate leaf we have. So flat, just from the laundry, as if pressed by some invisible flat-

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iron in the air. Unfolding with such mathematical precision in the free air, — green, starched and pressed, — might they not be transferred, patterns for Mechlin and Brussels? Skunk-cabbage, nodding trillium with concealed flowers, sarsaparilla, and arums, uvularias in thick-sown regiments now past their prime — a rank growth of these, forming an almost uninterrupted counter of green leaves a foot or two above the damp ground. *Actæa alba* some time. Maidenhair — frames of basins spirally arranged. The pitch pines just out, with crowded bunches of staminate blossoms about the new shoots.

That barberry bush near the bars on Conantum is methinks now the most beautiful, light, and graceful bush that I ever saw in bloom. It is shaped like a haycock, broad and dense, yet light as if some leaven had raised it. But how orientally beautiful now, seen through this dark mizzling air, its parallel or rather concentric wreaths composed of leaves and flowers keeping each other apart and lightening the whole mass, each wreath above composed of rich dark-green leaves, below of drooping racemes of lively yellow flowers! Its beauty consists in a great measure in this intimate mixture of flowers and leaves, the small rich-colored flowers not being too much massed. It suggests the yellow-robed priests perchance of Thibet (?). The lowest wreaths lie on the ground. But go not so near as to be disturbed by that sickening buttery odor, as of an underdone batter pudding, all eggs but no spice. Who would think this would bake into such a red acid fruit?

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Woodchucks seen tumbling into their holes.

The *Galium aparine*, common cleavers, a new one and the earliest, several days out, perhaps, high up at the base of the rocks under Lee's Cliff. In the same place *Turritis stricta*, straight tower-mustard, a slender towering plant with a delicate whitish or purplish-white blossom; not in Bigelow, nor located in New England by Gray. Side-flowering sandwort is abundant, for some time, by wall of Lee's field near Garfield's. The *Cratægus Crus-Galli* is all ready to blossom close by the barberry bush on Conantum. It is distinguished by its leaves, which are wedge-obovate with a short petiole and shining on the upper side, as if varnished and the varnish had soaked in in spots. What is that soft-leaved rubus (?), three-leaved with the odd one wedge-based, now in bloom? I see no thorns on my slip.

May 27. 5.30 A. M. — To Island.

The *Cornus florida* now fairly out, and the involucres are now not greenish-white but white tipped with reddish — like a small flock of white birds passing — three and a half inches in diameter, the larger ones, as I find by measuring. It is something quite novel in the tree line. That needle-shaped variety of thorn is now almost *fully* out on Lee's Hill; *i. e.* half the flowers open. Amelanchier berries are as large as small peas. How beautiful the geranium flower-buds just opening! — little purple cylindrical tubes or hoods — cigaritos — with the petals lapped over and round each other. One opens visibly in a pitcher before me. Heard

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a stake-driver yesterday in the rain. It sounded exactly like a man pumping, while another man struck on the head of the pump with an axe, the last strokes sounding peculiarly dry and hard like a forcible echo from the wood-side. One would think all Concord would be built on piles by this time. Very deliberately they drive, and in the intervals are considering the progress of the pile into the soft mud. They are working by the day. He is early and late at his work, building his stake[?]-house, yet did anybody ever see the pile he had driven? He has come back from his Southern tour to finish that job of spile-driving which he undertook last year. It is heavy work — not to be hurried. Only green hands are overhasty.

A turtle walking is as if a man were to try to walk by sticking his legs and arms merely out the windows.

P. M. — To Saw Mill Brook.

Cleared up last night after two and a half days' rain. This, with the two days' rain the 18th and 19th, makes our May rain — and more rain either of the two than at any other time this spring. Coming out into the sun after this rain, with my thick clothes, I find it unexpectedly and oppressively warm. Yet the heat seems tempered by a certain moisture still lingering in the air. (Methinks I heard a cuckoo yesterday and a quail (?) to-day.) A new season has commenced — summer — leafy June. The elms begin to droop and are heavy with shade. The buttercups in the churchyard are now in perfection, and it is surprising what a fairyland they make on some hillsides, looking more

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glossy and bright than ever after the rain. The vireo, too, is heard more than ever on the elms; his note begins to prevail. The broad pads lying on the surface of the ditches on the Turnpike seem to reflect a fierce heat upon the traveller. Yellow clover is out — how long? Hellebore a day or two at Saw Mill Brook — its great spike of green flowers with yellow anthers. Its great plaited leaves look like a green shirt bosom; drawn out smooth they prove to be basins. Was that *Stellaria longifolia* in bloom in the low ground at Saw Mill Brook? The crickets, which I have heard for a week now more and more, as much as anything mark a new season. They are importers of thought into the world — the poor trivial world; wholesale dealers in that article. Blue-eyed grass has been out some time, as I judge by the size of its seed-vessel. The river does not look blue from Smith's Hill, — nor has it from any point for some time past, — but indistinctly slaty and rippling, as through a mistiness. Is it not getting to be too warm? A gray down or lint comes off of the leaves and shoots, which have grown so rapidly during the warm wet weather, and whitens the clothes with clean dirt. This is the state of the woods — the beardless woods, with downy cheek as yet. Sit in shade nowadays. The bullfrogs lie spread out on the surface of Flint's Pond. Holding down my head, the young rushes begin to look thick and green in the shallow water advancing into the deep.

8 P. M. — Up Union Turnpike.

The reign of insects commences this warm evening

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after the rains. They could not come out before. I hear from the pitch pine woods beyond E. Wood's a vast faint hum, as of a factory far enough off to be musical. I can fancy it something ambrosial from starlit mansions, a faint murmuring harp music rising from all groves; and soon insects are felt on the hands and face, and dor-bugs are heard humming by, or entangled in the pines, like winged bullets. I suppose that those dor-bugs which I saw the other day just beginning to stir under the dead leaves have now first issued forth. They never mistake their time. Between the pines here, white and pitch, whose outlines are dimly seen, — the rising grass cool and damp beneath, — they are heard like a thousand bullets. The toads, too, completely fill the air with their dreamy snore; so that I wonder that everybody does not remark upon it and, the first time they hear it, do not rush to the riverside and the pools and capture a thousand; but hardly the naturalists know whence the sound proceeds, and nobody else seems to hear it at all. The whole air trembles with it, and hearing has no other pillow but this rippling one. Tree-toads, too, keep up an incessant din from elms (?) — when near, drowning the common toads.

The toads gradually ceased after midnight and I heard not one in the morning. They want much muggy warmth.

May 28. A rose in a garden.

5 P. M. — To Lupine Hill by boat.

The carnival of the year commencing — a warm, moist,

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hazy air, the water already smooth and uncommonly high, the river overflowing, and yellow lilies all drowned, their stems not long enough to reach the surface. I see the boat-club, or three or four in pink shirts, rowing at a distance. Beech-drops out apparently some days, the old bridge landing at Nawshawtuct; also just out green-briar. Already the ringing croak of a toad *begins* to be heard here and there along the river, and the *troonk* of a bullfrog from time to time. What is peculiar now, beginning yesterday, after rains, is the sudden heat, and the more general sound of insects by day, and the loud ringing croak of common toads and tree-toads at evening and in the night. Our river has so little current that when the wind has gone down, as at present, it is dark and perfectly smooth, and at present dusty as a stagnant pool in every part of it; far from there being any murmur, there is no ripple nor eddy for the most part. Hubbard has plowed up the low-lying field at the bathing-place and planted it with potatoes; and now we find that the field we resort to was equally used by the Indians, for their arrowheads are now exposed by the plow. The sidesaddle-flower conspicuous, but no pollen yet. The bulbous arethusa out a day or two — probably yesterday. Though in a measure prepared for it, still its beauty surprised me; it is by far the highest and richest color yet. Its intense color in the midst of the green meadow made it look twice as large as reality; it looks very foreign in the midst of our plants —its richly speckled, curled, and bearded lip. Devil's-needles begin to fly; saw one the 14th. Thesium just

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out. This hazy afternoon the sun is shorn of his beams now at six o'clock, and the lupines do not look so well for it; their lilac tints show best looking at them towards the sun, for they are transparent. Last night in the dark they were all a pale, whitish color like the moon by day — a mere dull luminousness, as if they reflected light absorbed by day. Seen from this point now, the pitch pines on Bear Garden Hill, the fresh green foliage of the deciduous trees now so prevails, the pitch pines, which lately looked green, are of a dark-brownish or mulberry color by contrast, and the white pines almost as dark, but bluer. In this haziness no doubt they are a *little* darker than usual. The grass on pretty high ground is wet with dew an hour before sunset. Whiteweed now, and cotton-grass. For three quarters of an hour the sun is a great round red ball in the west, reflected in the water; at first a scarlet, but as it descends growing more purple and crimson and larger, with a blue bar of a cloud across it; still reflected in the water, two suns, one above the other, below the hilly bank; as if it were a round hole in the cope of heaven, through which we looked into a crimson atmosphere. If such scenes were painted faithfully they would be pronounced unnatural. It is remarkable at how little distance a hillside covered with lupines looks blue, while a house or board painted blue is seen so great a distance.

A sprig of wilted fir now grown an inch emits that rich fragrance somewhat like strawberries and pine-apples, yet peculiar.

Mayhew, in his "London Labour and London

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Poor," treating of the costermongers, or those who get their living in the streets of London, speaks of "the muscular irritability begotten by continued wandering," making one "unable to rest for any time in one place." Mentions the instance of a girl who had been accustomed to sell sprats in the streets, who having been taken into a gentleman's house out of charity, "the pressure of shoes was intolerable to her." "But no sooner did she hear from her friends, that sprats were again in the market, than as if there were some magical influence in the fish, she at once requested to be freed from the confinement, and permitted to return to her old calling." I am perhaps equally accustomed to a roaming field-life, experience a good deal of that muscular irritability, and have a good many friends who let me know when sprats are in the market.

May 29. These last two days, with their sultry, hazy air, are the first that suggest the expression "the furnace-like heat." Bathing has begun. In the evening and during the night the ring of the toads fills the air, so that some have to shut the windows toward the river, but when you awake in the morning not one is to be heard. As it grows warmer in the forenoon I hear a few again; but still I do not hear them numerously and loudly as earlier in the season at that hour, though far more numerously and loudly at night.

P. M. — To Hosmer's Holden place.

Thimble-berry two or three days. Cattle stand in

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the river by the bridge for coolness. Place my hat lightly on my head that the air may circulate beneath. Wild roses budded before you know it — will be out often before you know they are budded. Fields are whitened with mouse-ear gone to seed — a mass of white fuzz blowing off one side — and also with dandelion globes of seeds. Some plants have already reached their fall. How still the hot noon; people have retired behind blinds. Yet the kingbird — lively bird, with white belly and tail edged with white, and with its lively twittering — stirs and keeps the air brisk. I see men and women through open windows in white undress taking their Sunday-afternoon nap, overcome with heat. At A. Hosmer's hill on the Union Turnpike I see the tanager hoarsely warbling in the shade; the surprising red bird, a small morsel of Brazil, advanced picket of that Brazilian army, — parrot-like. But no more shall we see; it is only an affair of outposts. It appears as if he loved to contrast himself with the green of the forest. These are afternoons when you expect a thunder-shower before night; the outlines of cloudy cumuli are dimly seen through the hazy, furnace-like air rising in the west. *Spergularia rubra*, spurry sandwort, in the roadside ditch on left just beyond A. Hosmer's hill; also *Veronica peregrina* (?) a good while. The last also in Great Fields in the path.

Raspberry out. That exceedingly neat and interesting little flower blue-eyed grass now claims our attention. The barrenest pastures wear now a green and luxuriant aspect. I see many of those round,

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white, pigeon-egg fungi in the grass since the rains. Do they become puffballs? The thyme-leaved veronica shows its modest face in little crescent-shaped regiments in every little hollow in the pastures where there is moisture, and around stumps and in the road ditches. The *Crataegus Crus-Galli* this side the Holden place on left, probably yesterday, thorns three inches long, flowers with anthers not conspicuously red. The *Viola debilis* near west end of Holden farm in meadow south side of road.

May 30. The morning wind forever blows; the poem of the world is uninterrupted, but few are the ears that hear it. Forever that strain of the harp which soothed the Cerberus and called me back to life is sounding. Olympus is the outside of the earth everywhere.

5 A. M. — To Cliffs.

High blackberry out. As I go by Hayden's in the still cool morning, the farmer's door is open — probably his cattle have been attended to — and the odor of the bacon which is being fried for his breakfast fills the air. The dog lies with his paws hanging over the door-sill this agreeably cool morning. The cistus out, probably yesterday, — a simple and delicate flower, its stamens all swept to one side. It upholds a delicate saffron-golden (?) basin about nine inches from the ground.

As I look off from Fair Haven I perceive that that downy, silvery hoariness has mostly left the leaves (it now comes off on to the clothes), and they are of

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a uniform smooth light green, while the pines are a dirty dark brown, almost purple, and are mostly merged and lost in the deciduous trees. The *Erigeron bellidifolius* is a tender-looking, pale-purple, aster-like flower a foot high in little squads, nodding in the wind on the bare slopes of hill pastures. Young bush-like black cherries a day or two, on Cliffs and in such favorable places. The hylodes were about done peeping before those last few warm days, — when the toads began in earnest in the river, — but last night being somewhat cooler they were not so loud.

P. M. — To Carlisle Bridge by boat.

A strong but somewhat gusty southerly wind, before which C. and I sailed all the way from home to Carlisle Bridge in not far from an hour; the river unusually high for the season. Very pleasant to feel the strong, fresh southerly wind from over the water. There are no clouds in the sky, but a high haziness, as if the moisture drawn up by yesterday's heat was condensed by to-day's comparative coolness. The water a dull slate-color and waves running high, — a dirty yellow where they break, — and long streaks of white foam, six or eight feet apart, stretching north and south between Concord and Bedford, — without end. The common blue flag just out at Ball's Hill. The white maples, especially those shaped like large bushes, on the banks are now full of foliage, showing the white under sides of the leaves in the wind, and the swamp white oak, having similar silvery under sides to its leaves, and both growing abundantly and prevailing

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here along the river, make or impart a peculiar flashing light to the scenery in windy weather, all bright, flashing, and cheerful. On the meadows are large yellow-green patches of ferns beginning to prevail. Passed a large boat anchored off in the meadows not far from the boundary of Concord. It was quite a piece of ocean scenery, we saw it so long before reaching it and so long after; and it looked larger than reality, what with the roaring of the wind in our shrouds and the dashing of the waves. The incessant drifting about of a boat so anchored by a long cable, playing with its halter, now showing more, now less, of its side, is a pleasing sight. Landed at a high lupine bank by Carlisle Bridge. How many such lupine banks there are! — whose blue you detect many rods off. There I found, methinks, minute *Specularia perfoliata*, with small crenate clasping leaves alternate at some distance apart, on upright stems about three inches high, but apparently *fruiting in the bud*. Also the *Silene antirrhina* very abundant there. The *Viola palmata*, which is later, and therefore, methinks, fresher than most, is now quite prevalent, one of the most common, in fact, in low ground and a very handsome purple, with more red than usual in its violet. The pines now dotted with white shoots, the pitch pines a little reddish, are an interesting sight now. Whence came all those dead suckers, a dozen at least, which we saw floating to-day, some on their sides, transversely barred, some on their backs with their white bellies up and dark fins on each side? Why are they suckers only that we see? Can it be because the spearers have

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thrown them away? Or has some bird of prey dropped them? I rarely see other fish floating. Melvin gave George Brooks some pink azaleas yesterday, said to have grown in the north part of the town.[1] The white maple keys falling and covering the river.

May 31. Some incidents in my life have seemed far more allegorical than actual; they were so significant that they plainly served no other use. That is, I have been more impressed by their allegorical significance and fitness; they have been like myths or passages in a myth, rather than mere incidents or history which have to wait to become significant. Quite in harmony with my subjective philosophy. This, for instance: that, when I thought I knew the flowers so well, the beautiful purple azalea or pinxter-flower should be shown me by the hunter who found it. Such facts are lifted quite above the level of the actual. They are all just such events as my imagination prepares me for, no matter how incredible. Perfectly in keeping with my life and characteristic. Ever and anon something will occur which my philosophy has not dreamed of. The limits of the actual are set some thoughts further off. That which had seemed a rigid wall of vast thickness unexpectedly proves a thin and undulating drapery. The boundaries of the actual are no more fixed and rigid than the elasticity of our imaginations. The fact that a rare and beautiful flower which we never saw, perhaps never heard [of], for which therefore there was no place in our thoughts,

[1] *Vide* forward [next page].

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may at length be found in our immediate neighborhood, is very suggestive.

P. M. — A change in the weather. It is comparatively cool since last night, and the air is very clear accordingly; none of that haze in it occasioned by the late heat. Yesterday was another very windy day, making the sixth, I believe, of this May, the 23d having been the last. The leaves are now fairly expanded — that has been the work of May — and are of a dark summer greenness. Some have even begun to cut the rankest grass in front yards. May has been, on the whole, a pleasant month, with a few days of gentle rain-storm, — fishermen's rains, — straight down and spattering on the earth, — and the last week quite warm, even somewhat sultry and summer-like. The bulk of the planting has been done this month, and there have been half a dozen days of strong, breezy and gusty, but not cold, winds, — northwest and then southwest and south. It is surprising to see how many leaves are already attacked by insects, — leaf-rollers, pincushion galls, one kind of oak-balls, etc., etc.; and many a shrub and tree, black cherry and shrub oak, is no sooner leaved out than it is completely stripped by its caterpillar foes.

I am going in search of the *Azalea nudiflora*. Sophia brought home a single flower without twig or leaf from Mrs. Brooks's last evening. Mrs. Brooks, I find, has a large twig in a vase of water, still pretty fresh, which she says George Melvin gave to her son George. I called at his office. He says that Melvin came in to

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Mr. Gourgas's office, where he and others were sitting Saturday evening, with his arms full and gave each a sprig, but he does n't know where he got it. Somebody, I heard, had seen it at Captain Jarvis's; so I went there. I found that they had some still pretty fresh in the house. Melvin gave it to them Saturday night, but they did not know where he got it. A young man working at Stedman Buttrick's said it was a secret; there was only one bush in the town; Melvin knew of it and Stedman knew; when asked, Melvin said he got it in the swamp, or from a bush, etc. The young man thought it grew on the Island across the river on the Wheeler farm. I went on to Melvin's house, though I did not expect to find him at home at this hour, so early in the afternoon. (Saw the wood-sorrel out, a day or two perhaps, by the way.) At length I saw his dog by the door, and knew he was at home.

He was sitting in the shade, bareheaded, at his back door. He had a large pailful of the azalea recently plucked and in the shade behind his house, which he said he was going to carry to town at evening. He had also a sprig set out. He had been out all the forenoon and said he had got seven pickerel, — perhaps ten [?]. Apparently he had been drinking and was just getting over it. At first he was a little shy about telling me where the azalea grew, but I saw that I should get it out of him. He dilly-dallied a little; called to his neighbor Farmer, whom he called "Razor," to know if he could tell me where that flower grew. He called it, by the way, the "red honeysuckle." This was to prolong the time and make the most of his secret. I felt

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pretty sure the plant was to be found on Wheeler's land beyond the river, as the young man had said, for I had remembered how, some weeks before this, when I went up the Assabet after the yellow rocket, I saw Melvin, who had just crossed with his dog, and when I landed to pluck the rocket he appeared out of the woods, said he was after a fish-pole, and asked me the name of my flower. Did n't think it was very handsome, — "not so handsome as the honeysuckle, is it?" And now I knew it was his "red honeysuckle," and not the columbine, he meant. Well, I told him he had better tell me where it was; I was a botanist and ought to know. But he thought I could n't possibly find it by his directions. I told him he 'd better tell me and have the glory of it, for I should surely find it if he did n't; I 'd got a clue to it, and should n't give it up. I should go over the river for it. I could smell it a good way, you know. He thought I could smell it half a mile, and he wondered that I had n't stumbled on it, or Channing. Channing, he said, came close by it once, when it was in flower. He thought he 'd surely find it then; but he did n't, and he said nothing to him.

He told me he found it about ten years ago, and he went to it every year. It blossomed at the old election time, and he thought it "the handsomest flower that grows." Yarrow just out.

In the meanwhile, Farmer, who was hoeing, came up to the wall, and we fell into a talk about Dodge's Brook, which runs through his farm. A man in Cambridge, he said, had recently written to Mr. Monroe about it, but he did n't know why. All he knew about

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the brook was that he had seen it dry and then again, after a week of dry weather in which no rain fell, it would be full again, and either the writer or Monroe said there were only two such brooks in all North America. One of its sources — he thought the principal one — was in his land. We all went to it. It was in a meadow, — rather a dry one, once a swamp. He said it never ceased to flow at the head now, since he dug it out, and never froze there. He ran a pole down eight or nine feet into the mud to show me the depth. He had minnows there in a large deep pool, and cast an insect into the water, which they presently rose to and swallowed. Fifteen years ago he dug it out nine feet deep and found spruce logs as big as his leg, which the beavers had gnawed, with the marks of their teeth very distinct upon them; but they soon crumbled away on coming to the air. Melvin, meanwhile, was telling me of a pair of geese he had seen which were breeding in the Bedford Swamp. He had seen them within a day. Last year he got a large brood (11?) of black ducks there.

We went on down the brook, — Melvin and I and his dog, — and crossed the river in his boat, and he conducted me to where the *Azalea nudiflora* grew, — it was a little past its prime, perhaps, — and showed me how near Channing came. ("You won't tell him what I said; will you?" said he.) I offered to pay him for his trouble, but he would n't take anything. He had just as lief I'd know as not. He thought it first came out last Wednesday, on the 25th.

Azalea nudiflora, — purple azalea, pinxter-flower,

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—but Gray and Bigelow say nothing about its *clamminess*. It is a conspicuously beautiful flowering shrub, with the sweet fragrance of the common swamp-pink, but the flowers are larger and, in this case, a fine lively rosy pink, not so clammy as the other, and, being earlier, it is free from the insects which often infest and spoil the first, though I find a very few little flies on them. With a broader, somewhat downy pale-green leaf. Growing in the shade of large wood, like the laurel. The flowers, being in naked umbels, are so much the more conspicuous. (The *Viola debilis* by the brook, near the azalea.) It is a flower with the fragrance of the swamp[-pink], without its extreme clamminess, and consequent insects, and with a high and beautiful color and larger segments to the corolla, with very much exserted stamens and pistil. Eaton says the *nudiflora* is "not viscous;" names half a dozen varieties and among them *A. partita* (flesh-colored flowers, 5-parted to the base), but then this is viscous. And it cannot be his species *A. nitida*, with glabrous and shining and small leaves. It must be an undescribed variety—a viscous one — of *A. nudiflora*.

Melvin says the gray squirrel nests are made of leaves, the red squirrel of pine stuff. Jarvis tells me that Stedman Buttrick once hired Melvin to work for him on condition that he should not take his gun into the field, but he had known him to do so when Buttrick was away and earn two or three dollars with his game beside his day's work, but of course the last was neglected.

There is a little danger of a frost to-night.

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IV

JUNE, 1853

(ÆT. 35)

June 1. Quite a fog this morning. Does it not always follow the cooler nights after the first really warm weather about the end of May? Saw a water snake yesterday, with its tail twisted about some dead weed stubble and quite dry and stiff for an inch, as if it were preparing to shed its skin. A wilted sprig of creeping juniper has a little, a very little, of sweet fragrance, somewhat like that of the fir and spruce. It seems to be just coming into bloom. Bees are swarming now, and those who keep them often have to leave their work in haste to secure them.

P. M. — To Walden.

Summer begins now about a week past, with the expanded leaves, the shade and warm weather. Cultivated fields also are *leaving* out, *i. e.* corn and potatoes coming up. Most trees have bloomed and are now forming their fruit. Young berries, too, are forming, and birds are being hatched. Dor-bugs and other insects have come forth the first warm evening after showers.

The birds have now all (?) come and no longer fly in flocks. The hylodes are no longer heard. The bullfrogs begin to trump. Thick and extensive fogs in the morning begin. Plants are rapidly growing, — *shooting.*

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Hoeing corn has commenced (June 1st). It is now the season of growth. The first bloom of the year is over. Have not wild animals now henceforth (?) their young? and fishes too?

The pincushion galls on young white oaks are now among the most beautiful objects in the woods, coarse woolly white to appearance, spotted with bright red or crimson on the exposed side. It is remarkable that a mere gall, which at first we are inclined to regard as something abnormal, should be made so beautiful, as if it were the *flower* of the tree; that a disease, an excrescence, should prove, perchance, the greatest beauty, — as the tear of the pearl. Beautiful scarlet sins they may be. Through our temptations, — aye, and our falls, — our virtues appear. As in many a character, — many a poet, — we see that beauty exhibited in a gall, which was meant to have bloomed in a flower, unchecked. Such, however, is the accomplishment of the world. The poet cherishes his chagrins and sets his sighs to music. This gall is the tree's "Ode to Dejection." How oft it chances that the apparent fruit of a shrub, its apple, is merely a gall or blight! How many men meet with some blast in the moist growing days of their youth, and what should have been a sweet and palatable fruit in them becomes a mere puff and excrescence, ripening no kernel, and they say that they have experienced religion! For the hardening of the seed is the crisis. Their fruit is a gall, a puff, an excrescence, for want of moderation and continence. So many plants never ripen their fruit.

I see the effects of a frost last night and earlier in

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the hollow west of Laurel Glen. The young white oaks have suffered especially, their leaves shrivelled and now drying up, and the hickories are turned quite black. These effects are most noticeable, not in the deepest hollows, if they are shady, but in those where the wood has been cut off a year or two, next to standing wood which reflected the sun, and which were the warmest during the day. Are not those trees which are latest to leave out generally the most tender in this respect?

I notice that most of the *Smilacina racemosa* has had its tip or flower-bud nipped off. Eggs in oven-bird's nest. The water-target leaves are conspicuous on the pond meadows now. The heart-leaves already on the river. A little of the pollen now along the shore of the still coves. The pitch pines near by have shed theirs.

The news of the explosion of the powder-mills was not only carried seaward by the cloud which its smoke made, but more effectually, though more slowly, by the fragments which were floated thither by the river. Melvin yesterday showed me quite a pile of fragments, — some short pieces of large timber, — still black with powder, which he had saved as they were drifting by. Nobody takes the trouble to record all the consequences of such an event. And some, no doubt, were carried down to the Merrimack, and by the Merrimack to the ocean, till perchance they got into the Gulf Stream and were cast up the coast of Norway, covered with barnacles, or who can tell what more distant strand? — still bearing some traces of burnt

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powder, still capable of telling how and where they were launched, to those who can read their signs. To see a man lying all bare, lank, and tender on the rocks, like a skinned frog or lizard! We did not suspect that he was made of such cold, tender, clammy substance before.

Mingling with wrecks of vessels, which communicated a different tale, this wreck of a powder-mill was cast up on some outlandish strand, and went to swell the pile of driftwood collected by some native. Shouldered by whales. Alighted on at first by the muskrat and the peetweet, — and finally perhaps the stormy petrel and the beach-birds. It is long before Nature forgets it. How slowly the ruins are being dispersed!

Viola pedata past its prime; and are not the *sagittata*, and run to leaf? and also the *cucullata* (?) (?), so that the *palmata* take their places? I am as white as a miller, — a rye-miller, at least, — with the lint from the young leaves and twigs. The tufts of pinks on the side of the peak by the pond grow raying out somewhat from a centre, somewhat like a cyme, on the warm dry side-hill, — some a lighter, some a richer and darker, shade of pink. With what a variety of colors we are entertained! Yet most colors are rare or in small doses, presented us as a condiment or spice. Much of green, blue, black, and white, but of yellow and the different shades of red far less. The eye feasts on the colors of flowers as on titbits; they are its spices.

I hear now, at five o'clock, from this hill, a farmer's

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horn calling his hands in from the field to an early tea. Heard afar by the walker, over the woods at this hour or at noon, bursting upon the stillness of the air, putting life into some portion of the horizon, this is one of the most suggestive and pleasing of the country sounds produced by man. I know not how far it is peculiar to New England or the United States. I hear two or three prolonged blasts, as I am walking alone some sultry noon in midst of the still woods, — a sound which I know to be produced by human breath, the most sonorous parts of which alone reach me, — and I see in my mind the hired men and master dropping the implements of their labor in the field and wending their way with a sober satisfaction toward the house; I see the well-sweep rise and fall; I see the preparatory ablutions and the table laden with the smoking meal. It is a significant hum in a distant part of the hive. Often it tells me [the] time of day.

How much lupine is now in full bloom on bare sandy brows or promontories running into meadows, where the sod is half worn away and the sand exposed! The geraniums are now getting to be common. *Hieracium venosum* just out on this peak. And the snapdragon catchfly is here abundantly in blossom, a little after 5 P. M., — a pretty little flower, the petals dull crimson beneath or varnished mahogany-color, and rose-tinted white within or above. It closed on my way home, but opened again in water in the evening. Its opening in the night chiefly is a fact which interests and piques me. Do any insects visit it then?

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Lambkill just beginning, the very earliest. A purple (!) Canada snapdragon.

New, bright, and glossy light-green leaves of the umbelled wintergreen are shooting on this hillside, but the old leaves are particularly glossy and shining, as if varnished and not yet dry, or most highly polished. Did they look thus in the winter? I do not know any leaf so wet-glossy.

Walking up this side-hill, I disturbed a nighthawk eight or ten feet from me, which went, half fluttering, half hopping, the mottled creature, like a winged toad, as Nuttall says the French of Louisiana (?) call them, down the hill as far as I could see. Without moving, I looked about and saw its two eggs on the bare ground, on a slight shelf of the hill, on the dead pine-needles and sand, without any cavity or nest whatever, very obvious when once you had detected them, but not easily detected from their color, a coarse gray formed of white spotted with a bluish or slaty brown or umber, — a stone — granite — color, like the places it selects. I advanced and put my hand on them, and while I stooped, seeing a shadow on the ground, looked up and saw the bird, which had fluttered down the hill so blind and helpless, circling low and swiftly past over my head, showing the white spot on each wing in true nighthawk fashion. When I had gone a dozen rods, it appeared again higher in the air, with its peculiar flitting, limping kind of flight, all the while noiseless, and suddenly descending, it dashed at me within ten feet of my head, like an imp of darkness, then swept away high over the pond, dashing

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now to this side now to that, on different tacks, as if, in pursuit of its prey, it had already forgotten its eggs on the earth. I can see how it might easily come to be regarded with superstitious awe. A cuckoo very plainly heard.

June 2. 3.30 A. M. — When I awake I hear the low universal chirping or twittering of the chip-birds, like the bursting bead on the surface of the uncorked day. First come, first served! You must taste the first glass of the day's nectar, if you would get all the spirit of it. Its fixed air begins to stir and escape. Also the robin's morning song is heard as in the spring, earlier than the notes of most other birds, thus bringing back the spring; now rarely heard or noticed in the course of the day.

4 A. M. — To Nawshawtuct.

I go to the river in a fog through which I cannot see more than a dozen rods, — three or four times as deep as the houses. As I row down the stream, the dark, dim outlines of the trees on the banks appear, coming to meet me out of the mist on the one hand, while they retreat and are soon concealed in it on the other. My strokes soon bury them behind me. The birds are wide awake, as if knowing that this fog presages a fair day. I ascend Nawshawtuct from the north side. I am aware that I yield to the same influence which inspires the birds and the cockerels, whose hoarse courage I hear now vaunted. So men should crow in the morning. I would crow like chan-

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ticleer in the morning, with all the lustiness that the new day imparts, without thinking of the evening, when I and all of us shall go to roost, — with all the humility of the cock, that takes his perch upon the highest rail and wakes the country with his clarion. Shall not men be inspired as much as cockerels? My feet are soon wet with fog. It is, indeed, a vast dew. And are not the clouds another kind of dew? Cool nights produce them.

Now I have reached the hilltop above the fog at a quarter to five, about sunrise, and all around me is a sea of fog, level and white, reaching nearly to the top of this hill, only the tops of a few high hills appearing as distant islands in the main. Wachusett is a more distant and larger island, an Atlantis in the west; there is hardly one to touch at between me and it. It is just like the clouds beneath you as seen from a mountain. It is a perfect level in some directions, cutting the hills near their summits with a geometrical line, but puffed up here and there, and more and more toward the east, by the influence of the sun. An early freight-train of cars is heard, not seen, rushing through the town beneath it. It resembles nothing so much as the ocean. You can get here the impression which the ocean makes, without ever going to the shore. Men — poor simpletons as they are — will go to a panorama by families, to see a Pilgrim's Progress, perchance, who never yet made progress so far as to the top of such a hill as this at the dawn of a foggy morning. All the fog they know is in their brains. The seashore exhibits nothing more grand or on a

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River Fog from Nawshawtuct Hill

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larger scale. How grand where it rolls off northeastward (?) over Ball's Hill like a glorious ocean after a storm, just lit by the rising sun! It is as boundless as the view from the highlands of Cape Cod. They are exaggerated billows, the ocean on a larger scale, the sea after some tremendous and unheard-of storm, for the actual sea never appears so tossed up and universally white with foam and spray as this now far in the northeastern horizon, where mountain billows are breaking on some hidden reef or bank. It is tossed up toward the sun and by it into the most boisterous of seas, which no craft, no ocean steamer, is vast enough to sail on.

Meanwhile my hands are numb with cold and my wet feet ache with it. Now, at 5.15, before this southwest wind, it is already grown thin as gossamer in that direction, and woods and houses are seen through it, while it is heaped up toward the sun, and finally becomes so thick there that for a short time it appears in one place a dark, low cloud, such as else can only be seen from mountains; and now long, dark ridges of wood appear through it, and now the sun reflected from the river makes a bright glow in the fog, and now, at 5.30, I see the green surface of the meadows and the water through the trees, sparkling with bright reflections. Men will go further and pay more to see a tawdry picture on canvas, a poor painted scene, than to behold the fairest or grandest scene that nature ever displays in their immediate vicinity, though they may have never seen it in their lives.

The triosteum a day or two. Cherry-birds are the

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only ones I see in flocks now. I can tell them afar by their peculiar fine springy note. The hickory is not yet blossomed. Sanicle and waxwork just out. On Monday saw apparently fresh-broken tortoise eggs. Locust tree just opening.

4 P. M. — To Conantum.

Equisetum limosum out some days. Look for it at Myosotis Brook, bottom of Wheildon's field. Side-saddle-flower — purple petals (?) now begin to hang down. Arethusas are abundant in what I may call Arethusa Meadow. They are the more striking for growing in such green localities, — in meadows where their brilliant purple, more or less red, contrasts with the green grass. Found four perfect arrowheads and one imperfect in the potato-field, just plowed up for the first time that I remember, at the Hubbard Bathing-Place. Each hill of potatoes (they are now just out of the ground) has been probed by some animal, and a great many of the potatoes, planted not long since, abstracted. Some are left on the surface. Almost every hill in the field which bounds on the river has been disturbed. Was it a muskrat, or a mink, or a woodchuck, or a skunk? The tracks are of the right size for any of these.

Viburnum Lentago in the hedge on west side of Arethusa Meadow. It is all fully out. It must be three or four days or more, then, some of it. *Clintonia borealis*, a day or two. This is perhaps the most interesting and neatest of what I may call the liliaceous (?) plants we have. Its beauty at present consists chiefly

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in its commonly three very handsome, rich, clear dark-green leaves, which Bigelow describes truly as "more than half a foot long, oblanceolate, smooth and shining." They are perfect in form and color, broadly oblanceolate with a deep channel down the middle, uninjured by insects, arching over from a centre at the ground, sometimes very symmetrically disposed in a triangular fashion; and from their midst rises the scape [a] foot high, with one or more umbels of "green bell-shaped flowers," yellowish-green, nodding or bent downward, but without fragrance. In fact, the flower is all green, both leaves and corolla. The leaves alone — and many have no scape — would detain the walker. Its berries are its flower. A single plant is a great ornament in a vase, from the beauty of its form and the rich, unspotted green of its leaves.

The sorrel now reddens the fields far and wide. As I look over the fields thus reddened in extensive patches, now deeper, now passing into green, and think of the season now in its prime and heyday, it looks as if it were the blood mantling in the cheek of the youthful year, — the rosy cheek of its health, its rude June health. The medeola has been out a day or two, apparently, — another green flower. The *Cornus alternifolia* at Conantum also apparently a day or two; and there is near by it a cockspur thorn. I hear the pine warbler note from a sparrow-like bird on pitch pines, employed like the pine warbler. Is it the female? The pinxter-flower growing as it does as an underwood in the shade of larger trees, the naked

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umbels of its lively rose-pink flowers are seen flashing out against a background of green or of dark shaded recesses. The lobes of the corolla are of a lively rose pink, the tubes and stamens of a deeper red. My sleepy catchflies open each night in a pitcher. An abundance of this flower as a weed in Mr. Prichard's garden.

June 3. *Friday.* P. M. — To Annursnack.

By way of the linnæa, which I find is not yet out. That thick pine wood is full of birds. Saw a large moth or butterfly exactly like a decayed withered leaf, — a rotten yellowish or buff. The small-leaved pyrola will open in a day or two. Two or three ripe strawberries on the south slope of a dry hill. I was thinking that they had set, when, seeking a more favorable slope, I found ripe fruit.

The painted-cup is in its prime. It reddens the meadow, — Painted-Cup Meadow. It is a splendid show of brilliant scarlet, the color of the cardinal-flower, and surpassing it in *mass* and *profusion*. They first appear on the side of the hill in drier ground, half a dozen inches high, and their color is most striking then, when it is most rare and precious; but they now cover the meadow, mingled with buttercups, etc., and many are more than eighteen inches high. I do not like the name; it does not remind me of a cup, rather of a flame, when it first appears. It might be called flame-flower, or scarlet-tip. Here is a large meadow full of it, and yet very few in the town have ever seen it. It is startling to see a leaf thus brilliantly

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painted, as if its tip were dipped into some scarlet tincture, surpassing most flowers in intensity of color. Seen from Annursnack the woods now appear full-leafed, smooth green, no longer hoary, and the pines a dark mulberry, not green. But you are still covered with lint as you go through the copses. Summer begins when the hoariness disappears from the forest as you look down on it, and gives place thus to smooth green, full and universal.

Butter-and-eggs just out. A small thorn with deep cut-lobed leaves, no flower, on this hill. May be a variety of the scarlet? White cedar now out of bloom. Is that rank grass by the Red Bridge, already between three and four feet high, wild oats?

The song of the robin and the chirp (?) of the chip-bird now begin prominently to usher in and to conclude the day. The robin's song seems not so loud as in the early spring, perhaps because there are so many other sounds at present.

June 4. *Saturday.* The date of the introduction of the *Rhododendron maximum* into Concord is worth preserving, May 16th, '53. They were small plants, one to four feet high, some with large flower-buds, twenty-five cents apiece; and I noticed next day one or more in every front yard on each side of the street, and the inhabitants out watering them. Said to be the most splendid native flower in Massachusetts; in a swamp in Medfield. I hear to-day that one in town has blossomed.

George Minott says he saw many lightning-bugs a

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warm evening the fore part of this week, after the rains. Probably it was the 29th.

P. M. — To Hubbard's Close Swamp.

The vetch just out by Turnpike, — dark violet-purple. Horse-radish fully out (some time). The great ferns are already two or three feet high in Hubbard's shady swamp. The clintonia is abundant there along by the foot of the hill, and in its prime. Look there for its berries. Commonly four leaves there, with an obtuse point, — the lady's-slipper leaf not so rich, dark green and smooth, having several channels. The bullfrog now begins to be heard at night regularly; has taken the place of the hylodes.

Looked over the oldest town records at the clerk's office this evening, the old book containing grants of land. Am surprised to find such names as "Walden Pond" and "Fair Haven" as early as 1653, and apparently 1652; also, under the first date at least, "Second Division," the rivers as North and South Rivers (no Assabet at that date), "Swamp bridge," apparently on back road, "Goose Pond," "Mr. Flints Pond," "Nutt Meadow," "Willow Swamp," "Spruce Swamp," etc., etc. "Dongy," "Dung Hole," or what-not, appears to be between Walden and Fair Haven. Is Rocky Hill Mr. Emerson's or the Cliffs? Where are South Brook, Frog Ponds, etc., etc., etc.? It is pleasing to read these evergreen wilderness names, *i. e.* of particular swamps and woods, then applied to now perchance cleared fields and meadows said to be redeemed. The Second Division appears to have been a very large tract between the two rivers.

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June 5. Sunday. 5 A. M. — By river to Nawshawtuct.

For the most part we are inclined to doubt the prevalence of gross superstition among the civilized ancients, — whether the Greeks, for instance, accepted literally the mythology which we accept as matchless poetry, — but we have only to be reminded of the kind of respect paid to the Sabbath as a *holy* day here in New England, and the fears which haunt those who *break* it, to see that our neighbors are the creatures of an equally gross superstition with the ancients. I am convinced that there is no very important difference between a New-Englander's religion and a Roman's. We both worship in the shadow of our sins: they erect the temples for us. Jehovah has no superiority to Jupiter. The New-Englander is a pagan suckled in a creed outworn. Superstition has always reigned. It is absurd to think that these farmers, dressed in their Sunday clothes, proceeding to church, differ essentially in this respect from the Roman peasantry. They have merely changed the names and number of their gods. Men were as good then as they are now, and loved one another as much — or little.

The sweet flag has been out some days. The *Smilacina racemosa.* The river has now assumed a summer aspect, the water gone down somewhat. The pickerel-weed is more conspicuous, a foot high or more, and potamogetons and polygonums appear, and pads are quite abundant. I see green flower-buds [1] on the tupelo. The hickory is fairly out. The azalea about done. The carrion-flower just out. Saw no

[1] They are flowers; also the 9th.

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blossom on the gill I looked at yesterday; its prime is probably past. Now see those great green, half fruit, half flower like, excrescences on blueberry and huckleberry bushes. The hemlocks, whose fresh light-green shoots have now grown half an inch or an inch, spotting the trees, contrasting with the dark green of last year's foliage, the fan-like sprays looking like bead bags.

P. M. — To Mason's pasture.

The world now full of *verdure* and *fragrance* and the air *comparatively* clear (not yet the constant haze of the dog-days), through which the distant fields are seen, reddened with sorrel, and the meadows wet-green, full of fresh grass, and the trees in their first beautiful, bright, untarnished and unspotted green. May is the bursting into leaf and early flowering, with much coolness and wet and a few decidedly warm days, ushering in summer; June, *verdure* and *growth* with not intolerable, but agreeable, heat.

The river meadows from N. Barrett's have for some time lost their early yellow look. Nightshade out, maybe some days. The young pitch pines in Mason's pasture are a glorious sight, now most of the shoots grown six inches, so soft and blue-green, nearly as wide as high. It is nature's front yard. The mountain laurel shows its red flower-buds, but many shoots have been killed by frost. A *Polygonatum pubescens* there two and a half feet long. The large thorn by Yellow Birch Swamp must be a *Cratægus coccinea*. Though full of fruit last year, it has not blossomed

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this year. There is a tract of pasture, woodland, orchard, and swamp in the north part of the town, through which the old Carlisle road runs, which is nearly two miles square, without a single house and scarcely any cultivated land in it, — four square miles. I perceive some black birch leaves with a beautiful crimson kind of sugaring along the furrows of the nerves, giving them wholly a bright-crimson color, — either a fungus or the deposit of an insect. Seen through a microscope it sparkles like a ruby.

Nature is fair in proportion as the youth is pure. The heavens and the earth are one flower. The earth is the calyx, the heavens the corolla.

June 6. 4.30 A. M. — To Linnæa Woods.

Famous place for tanagers. Considerable fog on river. Few sights more exhilarating than one of these banks of fog lying along a stream. The linnæa just out. *Corydalis glauca*, a delicate glaucous plant rarely met with, with delicate flesh-colored and yellow flowers, covered with a glaucous bloom, on dry, rocky hills. Perhaps it suggests gentility. Set it down as early as middle of May or earlier. *Viburnum nudum;* may be Bigelow's *pyrifolium* (which Gray makes a variety), except that its scales are not *black*, though the peduncle of its cyme is short. That is apparently *Pyrola chlorantha*, so well budded now. *Galium triflorum* (?) there on the dry hillside; peduncles two-flowered as well as three, green or no petals.

Is that blackberry mixed with the linnæa swamp blackberry? It will open to-day or to-morrow. Be-

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gin to observe and to admire the forms of trees with shining foliage and each its shadow on the hillside. This morning I hear the note of young bluebirds in the air, which have recently taken wing, and the old birds keep up such a warbling and twittering as remind me of spring.

According to Sophia's account she must have seen an emperor moth, "pea-green with a sort of maple keys for tail," in a lady's hand in Cambridge to-day. So it may have come out of the chrysalid seen May 23d.

P. M. — To Conantum by boat.

The *Potamogeton* [a blank space] out two or three days, probably. The small primrose out at Hubbard's Swimming-Place, drooping at top like a smilacina's leaves. Blue-eyed grass now begins to give that slaty-blue tint to meadows. A breezy day, a June wind showing the under sides of leaves. The *now red* round white lily pads are now very numerous and conspicuous, red more or less on both sides and, with the yellow lily pads, turned up by the wind. In May and June we have breezes which, for the most part, are not too cold but exhilarating. I see the breams' nests and breams in them. The larger rushes are conspicuously above water. The *Viburnum dentatum*, that very conspicuously and regularly tooth-leafed shrub, like a saw with coarse teeth, as yet *very few* flowers in its cymes. This is at edge of Hubbard's Woods, opposite Hollowell place. As I sit looking over the side of the boat there, I see the bottom covered with small hypericums springing up in the yellowish water,

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and in the axils of the leaves under water are little sparkling, silvery beads of air, as are sometimes seen on plants covered with dew out of water, but I do not perceive them on the adjacent plants. The deep shadow of Conantum Cliff and of mere prominences in the hills, now at mid-afternoon as we row by, is very interesting. It is the most pleasing effect of the kind, or contrast of light and shade, that I notice. Methinks that in winter a shadow is not attractive. The air is very clear, — at least, as we look from the river valley, — and the landscape all swept and brushed. We seem to see to some depth into the side of Fair Haven Hill. *Rhus Toxicodendron*, the shrub, out at Bittern Cliff. The sidesaddle-flowers are now in their prime. There are some very large ones hereabouts, five inches in diameter when you flatten out their petals, like great dull-red roses. Their petals are of a peculiar but agreeable red, but their upper sides, — *i. e.* of their calyx-leaves, — shiny leather-red or brown-red, are agreeable. A slippery elm (*Ulmus fulva*) on Lee's Cliff, — red elm. Put it with the common, It has large, rough leaves and straggling branches — a rather small, much-spreading tree, with an appearance between the common elm and iron-wood.

The aspect of the dry rocky hills already indicates the rapid revolution of the seasons. The spring, that early age of the world, following hard on the reign of water and the barren rocks yet dripping with it, is past. How many plants have already dried up! — lichens and algæ, which we can still remember, as if belonging to a former epoch, saxifrage, crowfoot,

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anemone, columbine for the most part, etc. It is Lee's Cliff I am on. There is a growth confined to the damp and early spring. How dry and crisp the turf feels there now, not moist with melted snows, remembering, as it were, when it was the bottom of the sea. How wet-glossy the leaves of the red oak, now fully expanded! They shine when the sun comes out as after rain. I find on a shelf of the rock the *Turritis stricta*, now gone to seed; but two feet two inches high (Gray allows but one foot?); pods upright and nearly three inches long, linear; and flat leaves decidedly lanceolate or linear; but some minute imperfect unexpanded flowers still on it appear as if they would have been yellowish.

In the very open park in rear of the Rocks on the hilltop, where lambkill and huckleberries and grass alternate, came to one of those handsome, round, mirror-like pools a rod or two in diameter and surrounded with a border of fine weeds, such as you frequently meet with on the top of springy hills. Though warm and muddy at bottom, they are very beautiful and glassy and look as if they were cool springs; so high, exposed to the light, yet so wild and fertile, as if the fertility of the lowland was transferred to the summit of the hills. These are the kind of mirrors at which the huntresses in the golden age arranged their toilets, which the deer frequented and contemplated their branching horns in.

June 7. P. M. — To Walden.

Huckleberry-apples, which are various stages of a

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monstrous and abortive development of the flower, common now. Clover begins to redden the fields generally. The horsetail has for some time covered the causeway with a close, dense green, like moss. The quail is heard at a distance. The marsh speedwell has been out apparently some days. A little mowing begins in the gardens and front yards. The grass is in full vigor now, yet it is already parti-colored with whitish withered stems which worms have cut. Buttercups, of various kinds mingled, yellow the meadows, — the tall, the bulbous, and the *repens*. Probably a *Prinos lævigatus* in Trillium Woods, ready to blossom. Observe its berries in the fall. The cinquefoil in its ascending state, keeping pace with the grass, is now abundant in the fields. Saw it one or two weeks ago. This is a feature of June. Still both high and low blueberry and huckleberry blossoms abound. The hemlock woods, their fan-like sprays edged or spotted with short yellowish-green shoots, tier above tier, shelf above shelf, look like a cool bazar of rich embroidered goods. How dense their shade, dark and cool beneath them as in a cellar! No plants grow there, but the ground is covered with fine red leaves. It is oftenest on a side-hill they grow. The oven-bird runs from her covered nest, so close to the ground under the lowest twigs and leaves, even the loose leaves on the ground, like a mouse, that I cannot get a fair view of her. She does not fly at all. Is it to attract me, or partly to protect herself? The *Viburnum acerifolium* will open to-morrow or next day.

Going through Thrush Alley, see the froth on the

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base of the shoots of the pitch pine, now three or four to ten inches long.

[Visited my nighthawk on her nest. Could hardly believe my eyes when I stood within seven feet and beheld her sitting on her eggs, her head to me. She looked so Saturnian, so one with the earth, so sphinx-like, a relic of the reign of Saturn which Jupiter did not destroy, a riddle that might well cause a man to go dash his head against a stone.] It was not an actual living creature, far less a winged creature of the air, but a figure in stone or bronze, a fanciful production of art, like the gryphon or phœnix. In fact, with its breast toward me, and owing to its color or size no bill perceptible, it looked like the end [of] a brand, such as are common in a clearing, its breast mottled or alternately waved with dark brown and gray, its flat, grayish, weather-beaten crown, its eyes nearly closed, purposely, lest those bright beads should betray it, with the stony cunning of the sphinx. A fanciful work in bronze to ornament a mantel. It was enough to fill one with awe. The sight of this creature sitting on its eggs impressed me with the venerableness of the globe. There was nothing novel about it. All the while, this seemingly sleeping bronze sphinx, as motionless as the earth, was watching me with intense anxiety through those narrow slits in its eyelids. Another step, and it fluttered down the hill close to the ground, with a wabbling motion, as if touching the ground now with the tip of one wing, now with the other, so ten rods to the water, which [it] skimmed close over a few rods, then rose and soared in the air above me. Wonder-

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ful creature, which sits motionless on its eggs on the barest, most exposed hills, through pelting storms of rain or hail, as if it were a rock or a part of the earth itself, the outside of the globe, with its eyes shut and its wings folded, and, after the two days' storm, when you think it has become a fit symbol of the rheumatism, it suddenly rises into the air a bird, one of the most aerial, supple, and graceful of creatures, without stiffness in its wings or joints! It was a fit prelude to meeting Prometheus bound to his rock on Caucasus.

Autumnal dandelion out. For a long time the cows, having been turned out to pasture, have looked clean and sleek. How many plants and flowers smell like strawberries, — a wild moss rose bud to-day; and the acanthus flower is strongly like strawberries partly decayed in the box. Perhaps the flower was stale.

June 8. *Wednesday.* P. M. — To Well Meadow.

Nest of a Maryland yellow-throat by Utricularia Pool in a tuft of sedge ; made of dry sedge, grass, and a few dry leaves ; about four small eggs, a delicate white with reddish-brown spots on larger end ; the nest well concealed. At the last small pond near Well Meadow, a frog, apparently a small bullfrog, on the shore enveloped by a swarm of small, almost invisible insects, some resting on him, attracted perhaps by the slime which shone on him. He appeared to endure the persecution like a philosopher. *Utricularia vulgaris* out, how long?

As I stood by this pond, I heard a hawk scream,

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and, looking up, saw a pretty large one circling not far off and incessantly screaming, as I at first supposed to scare and so discover its prey, but its screaming was so incessant and it circled from time to time so near me, as I moved southward, that I began to think it had a nest near by and was angry at my intrusion into its domains. As I moved, the bird still followed and screamed, coming sometimes quite near or within gunshot, then circling far off or high into the sky. At length, as I was looking up at it, thinking it the only living creature within view, I was singularly startled to behold, as my eye by chance penetrated deeper into the blue, — the abyss of blue above, which I had taken for a solitude, — its mate silently soaring at an immense height and seemingly indifferent to me. We are surprised to discover that there can be an eye on us on that side, and so little suspected, that the heavens are full of eyes, though they look so blue and spotless. Then I knew it was the female that circled and screamed below. At last the latter rose gradually to meet her mate, and they circled together there, as if they could not possibly feel any anxiety on my account. When I drew nearer to the tall trees where I suspected the nest to be, the female descended again, swept by screaming still nearer to me just over the tree-tops, and finally, while I was looking for the orchis in the swamp, alighted on a white pine twenty or thirty rods off. (The great fringed orchis just open.) At length I detected the nest about eighty feet from the ground, in a very large white pine by the edge of the swamp. It was about three feet in diameter,

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of dry sticks, and a young hawk, apparently as big as its mother, stood on the edge of the nest looking down at me, and only moving its head when I moved. In its imperfect plumage and by the slow motion of its head it reminded me strongly of a vulture, so large and gaunt. It appeared a tawny brown on its neck and breast, and dark brown or blackish on wings. The mother was light beneath, and apparently lighter still on rump.

The *Pyrola chlorantha*, — if the style can be said to be "scarcely exserted," — under Cliffs, a day or more. The *Aralia hispida* at the foot of the rocks higher up, earlier than elsewhere. White pine in flower, — all the female flowers on the very tops of the trees, a small crimson cone upright on the ends of its peduncles, while the last year's, now three or four inches long and green, are curved downward like scythes. Best seen looking down on the tops of lower pines from the top of a higher one. Apparently just beginning.

June 9. 4.30 A. M. — To Nawshawtuct by boat.

A prevalent fog, though not quite so thick as the last described. It is a little more local, for it is so thin southwest of this hill that I can see the earth through it, but as thick as before northeast. Yet here and there deep valleys are excavated in it, as painters imagine the Red Sea for the passage of Pharaoh's host, wherein trees and houses appear as it were at the bottom of the sea. What is peculiar about it is that it is the tops of the trees which you see first and most distinctly, before you see their trunks or where they stand on

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earth. Far in the northeast there is, as before, apparently a tremendous surf breaking on a distant shoal. It is either a real shoal, *i. e.* a hill over which the fog breaks, or the effect of the sun's rays on it.

I was amused by the account which Mary, the Irish girl who left us the other day, gave of her experience at —— ——, the milkman's, in the north part of the town. She said that twenty-two lodged in the house the first night, including two pig men, that Mr. —— kept ten men, had six children and a deaf wife, and one of the men had his wife with him, who helped sew, beside taking care of her own child. Also all the cooking and washing for his father and mother, who live in another house and whom he is bound to carry through, is done in his house, and she, Mary, was the only girl they hired; and the workmen were called up at four by an alarm clock which was set a quarter of an hour ahead of the clock downstairs, — and that more than as much ahead of the town clock, — and she was on her feet from that hour till nine at night. Each man had two pairs of overalls in the wash, and the cans to be scalded were countless. Having got through washing the breakfast dishes by a quarter before twelve, Sunday noon, by ——'s time, she left, no more to return. He had told her that the work was easy, that girls had lived with him to recover their health, and then went away to be married. He is regarded as one of the most enterprising and thrifty farmers in the county, and takes the premiums of the Agricultural Society. He probably exacts too much of his hands.

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The steam of the engine streaming far behind is regularly divided, as if it were the vertebræ of a serpent, probably by the strokes of the piston. The reddish seeds or glumes of grasses cover my boots now in the dewy or foggy morning. The diervilla out apparently yesterday. The first white lily bud. White clover is abundant and very sweet on the common, filling the air, but not yet elsewhere as last year.

8 A. M. — To Orchis Swamp; Well Meadow.

Hear a goldfinch; this the second or third only that I have heard. Whiteweed now whitens the fields. There are many *star* flowers. I remember the anemone, especially the rue anemone, which is not yet all gone, lasting longer than the true one above all the trientalis, and of late the yellow Bethlehem-star, and perhaps others.

I have come with a spy-glass to look at the hawks. They have detected me and are already screaming over my head more than half a mile from the nest. I find no difficulty in looking at the young hawk (there appears to be one only, standing on the edge of the nest), resting the glass in the crotch of a young oak. I can see every wink and the color of its iris. It watches me more steadily than I it, now looking straight down at me with both eyes and outstretched neck, now turning its head and looking with one eye. How its eye and its whole head express anger! Its anger is more in its eye than in its beak. It is quite hoary over the eye and on the chin. The mother meanwhile is incessantly circling about and above its charge and me, farther or nearer,

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sometimes withdrawing a quarter of a mile, but occasionally coming to alight for a moment almost within gunshot, on the top of a tall white pine; but I hardly bring my glass fairly to bear on her, and get sight of her angry eye through the pine-needles, before she circles away again. Thus for an hour that I lay there, screaming every minute or oftener with open bill. Now and then pursued by a kingbird or a blackbird, who appear merely to annoy it by dashing down at its back. Meanwhile the male is soaring, apparently quite undisturbed, at a great height above, evidently not hunting, but amusing or recreating himself in the thinner and cooler air, as if pleased with his own circles, like a geometer, and enjoying the sublime scene. I doubt if he has his eye fixed on any prey, or the earth. He probably descends to hunt.

Got two or three handfuls of strawberries on Fair Haven. They are already drying up. The huckleberry bedbug-smelling bug is on them. It is natural that the first fruit which the earth bears should emit and be as it were an embodiment of that vernal fragrance with which the air has teemed. Strawberries are its manna, found ere long where that fragrance has filled the air. Little natural beds or patches on the sides of dry hills, where the fruit sometimes reddens the ground. But it soon dries up, unless there is a great deal of rain. Well, are not the juices of early fruit distilled from the air?

Prunella out. The meadows are now yellow with the golden senecio, a more orange yellow, mingled with the light glossy yellow of the buttercup. The

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green fruit of the sweet-fern now. The *Juniperus repens* appears, though now dry and effete, to have blossomed recently.

The tall white *Erigeron annuus* (?), for this is the only one described as white tinged with purple, just out.[1]

The bullfrogs are in full blast to-night. I do not hear a toad from my window; only the crickets beside. The toads I have but rarely heard of late.[2] So there is an evening for the toads and another for the bullfrogs.

June 10. *Friday.* Another great fog this morning. Haying commencing in front yards.

P. M. — To Mason's pasture in Carlisle.

Cool but agreeable easterly wind. Streets now beautiful with verdure and shade of elms, under which you look, through an air clear for summer, to the woods in the horizon. By the way, I amused myself yesterday afternoon with looking from my window, through a spy-glass, at the tops of the woods in the horizon. It was pleasant to bring them so near and individualize the trees, to examine in detail the tree-tops which before you had beheld only in the mass as the woods in the horizon. It was an exceedingly rich border, seen thus against [*sic*], and the imperfections in a particular tree-top more than two miles off were quite apparent. I could easily have seen a hawk sailing over the top of the wood, and possibly his nest in some higher tree. Thus to contemplate, from my attic in the village, the

[1] I think it is *strigosus*, but tinged with purple sometimes.

[2] *Vide* [p. 241].

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hawks circling about their nests above some dense forest or swamp miles away, almost as if they were flies on my own premises! I actually distinguished a taller white pine with which I am well acquainted, with a double top rising high above the surrounding woods, between two and three miles distant, which, with the naked eye, I had confounded with the nearer woods.

But to return, as C. and I go through the town, we hear the cool peep of the robin calling to its young, now learning to fly. The locust bloom is now perfect, filling the street with its sweetness, but it is more agreeable to my eye than my nose. The curled dock out. The fuzzy seeds or down of the black (?) willows is filling the air over the river and, falling on the water, covers the surface. By the 30th of May, at least, white maple keys were falling. How early, then, they had matured their seed! Cow-wheat out, and *Iris Virginica*, and the grape. The mountain laurel will begin to bloom to-morrow. The frost some weeks since killed most of the buds and shoots, except where they were protected by trees or by themselves, and now new shoots have put forth and grow four or five inches from the sides of what were the leading ones. It is a plant which plainly requires the protection of the wood. It is stunted in the open pasture. We continued on, round the head of "Cedar Swamp," and *may* say that we drank at the source of it or of Saw Mill Brook, where a spring is conducted through a hollow log to a tub for cattle. Crossed on to the old Carlisle road by the house north of Isaiah Green's, and then across

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the road through the woods to the Paul Adams house by Bateman's Pond. Saw a hog-pasture of a dozen acres in the woods, with thirty or forty large hogs and a shelter for them at night, a half-mile east of the last house, — something rare in these days hereabouts.

What shall this great wild tract over which we strolled be called? Many farmers have pastures there, and wood-lots, and orchards. It consists mainly of rocky pastures. It contains what I call the Boulder Field, the Yellow Birch Swamp, the Black Birch Hill, the Laurel Pasture, the Hog-Pasture, the White Pine Grove, the Easterbrooks Place, the Old Lime-Kiln, the Lime Quarries, Spruce Swamp, the Ermine Weasel Woods; also the Oak Meadows, the Cedar Swamp, the Kibbe Place, and the old place northwest of Brooks Clark's. Ponkawtasset bounds it on the south. There are a few frog-ponds and an old mill-pond within it, and Bateman's Pond on its edge. What shall the whole be called? The old Carlisle road, which runs through the middle of it, is bordered on each side with wild apple pastures, where the trees stand without order, having, many if not most of them, sprung up by accident or from pomace sown at random, and are for the most part concealed by birches and pines. These orchards are very extensive, and yet many of these apple trees, growing as forest trees, bear good crops of apples. It is a paradise for walkers in the fall. There are also boundless huckleberry pastures as well as many blueberry swamps. Shall we call it the Easterbrooks Country? It would make a princely

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estate in Europe, yet it is owned by farmers, who live by the labor of their hands and do not esteem it much. Plenty of huckleberries and barberries here.

A second great uninhabited tract is that on the Marlborough road, stretching westerly from Francis Wheeler's to the river, and beyond about three miles, and from Harrington's on the north to Dakin's on the south, more than a mile in width. A third, the Walden Woods. A fourth, the Great Fields. These four are all in Concord.

There are one or two in the town who probably have Indian blood in their veins, and when they exhibit any unusual irascibility, their neighbors say they have got their Indian blood roused.

C. proposes to call the first-named wild the Melvin Preserve, for it is favorite hunting-ground with George Melvin. It is a sort of Robin Hood Ground. Shall we call it the Apple Pastures?

Now, methinks, the birds begin to sing less tumultuously, with, as the weather grows more constantly warm, morning and noon and evening songs, and suitable recesses in the concert.

High blackberries conspicuously in bloom, whitening the side of lanes.

Mention is made in the Town Records, as quoted by Shattuck, page 33, under date of 1654, of "the Hogepen-walke about Annursnake," and reference is at the same time made to "the old hogepen." The phrase is "*in* the Hogepen-walke about Annursnake," *i. e.* in the hog-pasture. There is some propriety in calling such a tract a walk, methinks, from the habit

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which hogs have of walking about with an independent air and pausing from time to time to look about from under their flapping ears and snuff the air. The hogs I saw this afternoon, all busily rooting without holding up their heads to look at us, — the whole field looked as if it had been most miserably plowed or scarified with a harrow, — with their shed to retreat to in rainy weather, affected me as more human than other quadrupeds. They are comparatively clean about their lodgings, and their shed, with its litter bed, was on the whole cleaner than an Irishman's shanty. I am not certain what there was so very human about them.

In 1668 the town had a pasture near Silas Holden's and a herd of fifty cattle constantly watched by a "herdsman," etc. (page 43). In 1672 there is an article referring to the "crane field and brickil field."

June 11. *Saturday.* Another fog this morning.

The mosquitoes first troubled me a little last night. On the river at dusk I hear the toads still, with the bullfrogs. The black willow, having shed its fuzzy seeds and expanded its foliage, now begins to be handsome, so light and graceful.

The upland fields are already less green where the June-grass is ripening its seeds. They are greenest when only the blade is seen. In the sorrel-fields, also, what lately was the ruddy, rosy cheek of health, now that the sorrel is ripening and dying, has become the tanned and imbrowned cheek of manhood.

Probably blackbirds were never less numerous along our river than in these years. They do not depend on

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the clearing of the woods and the cultivation of orchards, etc. Streams and meadows, in which they delight, always existed. Most of the towns, soon after they were settled, were obliged to set a price upon their heads. In 1672, according to the town records of Concord, instruction was given to the selectmen, "That incorigment be given for the destroying of blackbirds and jaies." (Shattuck, page 45.)

Murder will out. I find, in the dry excrement of a fox left on a rock, the vertebræ and talons of a partridge (?) which he has consumed. They are *mémoires pour servir.*

I remember Helen's telling me that John Marston of Taunton told her that he was on board a vessel during the Revolution, which met another vessel,—and, as I think, one hailed the other,—and a French name being given could not be understood, whereupon a sailor, probably aboard his vessel, ran out on the bowsprit and shouted "La Sensible," [1] and that sailor's name was Thoreau. My father tells me that, when the war came on, my grandfather, being thrown out of business and being a young man, went a-privateering. I find from his Diary that John Adams set sail from Port Louis at L'Orient in the French frigate Sensible, Captain Chavagnes, June 17th, 1779, the Bonhomme Richard, Captain Jones, and four other vessels being in company at first, and the Sensible arrived at Boston the 2d of August. On

[1] The vessel in which John Adams was being brought back from or carried out to France. My father has an idea that he stood on the wharf and cried this to the bystanders.

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the 13th of November following, he set out for France again in the same frigate from Boston, and he says that a few days before the 24th, being at the last date "on the Grand Bank of Newfoundland," "we spoke an American privateer, the General Lincoln, Captain Barnes." If the above-mentioned incident occurred at sea, it was probably on this occasion.

June 12. *Sunday*. P. M. — To Bear Hill.

Maple-leaved viburnum well out at Laurel Glen, probably 9th.[1] The laurel probably by day after to-morrow. The note of the wood thrush answers to some cool unexhausted morning vigor in the hearer. The leaf of the rattlesnake-plantain now surprises the walker amid the dry leaves on cool hillsides in the woods; of very simple form, but richly veined with longitudinal and transverse white veins. It looks like art. Crows, like hawks, betray the neighborhood of their nests by harsh scolding at the intruder while they circle over the top of the wood. The red-eyed vireo is the bird most commonly heard in the woods. The wood thrush and the cuckoo also are heard now at noon. The round-leaved cornel fully out on Heywood Peak, but not in the woods. Did I mention that the sawed stump of the chestnut made a seat within the bower formed by its sprouts?

Going up Pine Hill, disturbed a partridge and her brood. She ran in deshabille directly to me, within four feet, while her young, not larger than a chicken just hatched, dispersed, flying along a foot or two

[1] *Vide* 6th.

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from the ground, just over the bushes, for a rod or two. The mother kept close at hand to attract my attention, and mewed and clucked and made a noise as when a hawk is in sight. She stepped about and held her head above the bushes and clucked just like a hen. What a remarkable instinct that which keeps the young so silent and prevents their peeping and betraying themselves! The wild bird will run almost any risk to save her young. The young, I believe, make a fine sound at first in dispersing, something like a cherry-bird.

I find beechnuts already about fully grown for size, where a tree overhangs Baker's hillside, and there are old nuts on the ground. Were they sound? This tree must have blossomed early, then. A light-green excrescence three inches in diameter on a panicled andromeda. The lint still comes off the bushes on to my clothes. The hedyotis long leaved out; only two or three plants to be found; probably some days.

Visited the great orchis which I am waiting to have open completely. It is emphatically a flower (within gunshot of the hawk's nest); its great spike, six inches by two, of delicate pale-purple flowers, which begin to expand at bottom, rises above and contrasts with the green leaves of the hellebore and skunk-cabbage and ferns (by which its own leaves are concealed) in the cool shade of an alder swamp. It is the more interesting for its rarity and the secluded situations in which it grows, owing to which it is seldom seen, not thrusting itself on the observation of men. It is a pale purple, as if from growing in the shade. It is not

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remarkable in its stalk and leaves, which indeed are commonly concealed by other plants.

Norway cinquefoil. A wild moss rose in Arethusa Meadow, where are arethusas lingering still. The sidesaddle-flowers are partly turned up now and make a great show, with their broad red petals flapping like saddle *ears* (?). The tree-climbing ivy. Was it out as early as the other? Apparently so.

I forgot to say that I visited my hawk's nest, and the young hawk was perched now four or five feet above the nest, still in the shade. It will soon fly. Now, then, in secluded pine woods, the young hawks sit high on the edges of their nests or on the twigs near by in the shade, waiting for their pinions to grow, while their parents bring to them their prey. Their silence also is remarkable, not to betray themselves, nor will the old bird go to the nest while you are in sight. She pursues me half a mile when I withdraw.

The buds of young white oaks which have been frost-bitten are just pushing forth again. Are these such as were intended for next year at the base of the leaf-stalk?

June 13. 9 A. M. — To Orchis Swamp.

Find that there are two young hawks; one has left the nest and is perched on a small maple seven or eight rods distant. This one appears much smaller than the former one. I am struck by its large, naked head, so vulture-like, and large eyes, as if the vulture's were an inferior stage through which the hawk passed. Its feet, too, are large, remarkably developed,

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by which it holds to its perch securely like an old bird, before its wings can perform their office. It has a buff breast, striped with dark brown. Pratt, when I told him of this nest, said he would like to carry one of his rifles down there. But I told him that I should be sorry to have them killed. I would rather save one of these hawks than have a hundred hens and chickens. It was worth more to see them soar, especially now that they are so rare in the landscape. It is easy to buy eggs, but not to buy hen-hawks. My neighbors would not hesitate to shoot the last pair of hen-hawks in the town to save a few of their chickens! But such economy is narrow and grovelling. It is unnecessarily to sacrifice the greater value to the less. I would rather never taste chickens' meat nor hens' eggs than never to see a hawk sailing through the upper air again. This sight is worth incomparably more than a chicken soup or a boiled egg. So we exterminate the deer and substitute the hog. It was amusing to observe the swaying to and fro of the young hawk's head to counterbalance the gentle motion of the bough in the wind.

Violets appear to be about done, generally. Four-leaved loosestrife just out; also the smooth wild rose yesterday. The pogonia at Forget-me-not Brook.

What was that rare and beautiful bird in the dark woods under the Cliffs, with black above and white spots and bars, a large triangular blood-red spot on breast, and sides of breast and beneath white? Note a warble like the oriole, but softer and sweeter. It was quite tame. I cannot find this bird described.

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I think it must be a grosbeak.[1] At first I thought I saw a chewink, [as] it sat within a rod sideways to me, and I was going to call Sophia to look at it, but then it turned its breast full toward me and I saw the blood-red breast, a *large* triangular painted spot occupying the greater part of the breast. It was in the cool, shaded underwood by the old path just under the Cliff. It is a memorable event to meet with so rare a bird. Birds answer to flowers, both in their abundance and their rareness. The meeting with a rare and beautiful bird like this is like meeting with some rare and beautiful flower, which you may never find again, perchance, like the great purple fringed orchis, at least. How much it enhances the wildness and the richness of the forest to see in it some beautiful bird which you never detected before!

June 14. P. M. — To White Pond.

Herd's-grass heads. The warmest afternoon as yet. Ground getting dry, it is so long since we had any rain to speak of.

C. says he saw a "lurker" yesterday in the woods on the Marlborough road. He heard a distressing noise like a man sneezing but long continued, but at length found it was a man wheezing. He was oldish and grizzled, the stumps of his grizzled beard about an inch long, and his clothes in the worst possible condition, — a wretched-looking creature, an escaped convict hiding in the woods, perhaps. He appeared holding on to his paunch, and wheezing as if it would

[1] Probably a rose-breasted grosbeak.

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kill him. He appeared to have come straight through the swamp, and — what was most interesting about him, and proved him to be a lurker of the first class, — one of our party, as C. said, — he kept straight through a field of rye which was fully grown, not regarding it in the least; and, though C. tried to conceal himself on the edge of the rye, fearing to hurt his feelings if the man should mistake him for the proprietor, yet they met, and the lurker, giving him a short bow, disappeared in the woods on the opposite side of the road. He went through everything.

Went to the Harrington Bathing-Place. Drank at the Tarbell Spring first. The swamp-pink by to-morrow. The *Allium Canadense* in Tarbell's meadow. Wild meadow garlic, with its head of bulbs and a few flower-buds, not yet; apparently with cultivated onion.

The desert at Dugan's is all scored over with tortoise-tracks, — two parallel dotted lines four or five inches apart, the impressions being nearly a half-inch deep, with the distinct mark of the tail making a waving line between. It looks as if twenty tortoises had spent a night travelling over it; and here and there there were marks of a slight digging, but I found no eggs. They came out of the brook near by. Perhaps they select such a bare sandy tract for their encounters, where there is no grass to impede them. Perhaps it makes the most remarkable track of any creature. Sometimes the sand appeared as if dabbled and patted for a foot or more in diameter.

Heard the first locust from amid the shrubs by the roadside. He comes with heat. Snake-sloughs are

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found nowadays; whitish and bleached they are. Beyond the rye-field on the Marlborough road, the oaks were extensively cut off by the frost some weeks ago. They are all dry and red for half a mile, — young trees eight or ten feet high, — as if a fire had run through them after they had grown two or three inches; and young red leaves are beginning to appear on them. Since the maples and birches are untouched (sometimes a maple!), it looks as if the fire had run in veins. Yet most travellers, if they did not ride close to them, would not notice them, perhaps being used as yet even to a wintry landscape. Is that the indigo-bird that sings, between here and White Pond, *a-chit chit-chit awee?* Perhaps the andromeda swamp on this path is as handsome as any, appearing so far down from the hills and still so level. I observed the cotton of aphides on the alders yesterday and to-day. How regularly these phenomena appear! — even the stains or spots or galls on leaves, as that bright yellow on blackberry leaves, now common, and those crimson ring-spots on maple leaves I see to-day, exactly the same pattern with last year's, and the crimson frosting on the black birch leaves I saw the other day. Then there are the huckleberry-apples, and the large green puffs on the panicled andromeda, and also I see now the very light or whitish solid and juicy apples on the swamp-pink, with a fungus-like smell when broken. *Erigeron annuus* (*?*),[1] some white, some purplish, common now and daisylike. I put it rather early on the 9th.

[1] [*Strigosus.*]

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On the Strawberry Hill on the further side of White Pond, about fifty feet above the pond and a dozen rods from it, found a painted tortoise laying her eggs. Her posterior was inserted into a slight cavity she had dug in the sandy hillside. There were three eggs already laid, the top of them hardly two inches below the surface. She had dug down about one and a half or two inches, somewhat in the form of the hind part of her shell, and then under the turf up the hill about two and a half inches, enlarging the cavity slightly within, leaving a neck of an oval form about seven eighths of an inch by one and a quarter inches, apparently packing the eggs with her tail. She lay still where I put her, while I examined her eggs, and I replaced her in the hole. A little further on, I saw where such a deposit had been broken up, apparently by a skunk, and the egg-shells strewn about. The *whole* hole about three inches deep. The three eggs already laid, about one inch long, cream-colored or slightly flesh-color, easily indented with the finger, but a little elastic, not exactly elliptical, but slightly larger at one end.

C. says his dog chased a woodchuck yesterday, and it climbed up into an oak and sat on a limb ten or twelve feet high. He killed a young rabbit. Took another bath at the cove in White Pond. We had already bathed in the North River at Harrington's.

It is about 5 P. M. The pond is perfectly smooth and very beautiful now. Its shores are still almost entirely uninjured by the axe. While we are dressing, the bullfrogs in this cove, it is so late in the day, are

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beginning to trump. They utter a short, laughable, belching sound from time to time and then break into a powerful trump as the whim takes them. The dog lies flat on his belly the while to cool him. We took an old leaky boat and a forked stick which had made part of a fence, and pushed out to see the shores from the middle of the pond. There sit the great paddocks in their yellow vests, imperturbable by the sides of the boat. See now the great stems of trees on the bottom and the stones curiously strewn about. Now we cross the bar to this cove; now we are leaving the edge of the heart-leaves, whose long, clean, slender, thread-like stems rise from the bottom still where six feet deep; and now the stones on the bottom grow dim, as if a mildew formed about them, and now the bottom is lost in the dim greenness of the water.

How beautifully the northeast (?) shore curves! The pines and other trees so perfect on their water side. There is no rawness nor imperfection to the edge of the wood in this case, as where an axe has cleared, or a cultivated field abuts on it; but the eye rises by natural gradations from the low shrubs, the alders, of the shore to the higher trees. It is a natural selvage. It is comparatively unaffected by man. The water laves the shore as it did a thousand years ago.[1] Such curves in a wood bordering on a field do not affect us as when it is a winding shore of a lake. This is a firmer edge. It will not be so easily torn.

Our boat leaked so, — faster and faster as it sank deeper and tipped with the water in it, — that we were

[1] [*Walden*, p. 206; Riv. 291.]

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obliged to turn to the shore. The blue flag (*Iris versicolor*) grows in this pure water, rising from the stony bottom all around the shores, and is very beautiful, — not too high-colored, — especially its reflections in the water. There was something [in] its bluish blade which harmonized with the greenish water.[1] The pollen of the pine yellowed the driftwood on the shore and the stems of bushes which stood in the water, and in little flakes extended out some distance on the surface, until at four or five rods in this cove it was suddenly and distinctly bounded by an invisible fence on the surface; but in the middle, as deep down as you could [see], there appeared some fine white particles in the water, either this or something else and perhaps some ova of fishes. Instead of the white lily, which requires mud, or the sweet flag, here grows the blue flag in the water, thinly about the shore. The color of the flower harmonizes singularly with the water.[2]

With our boat's prow to the shore, we sat half an hour this evening listening to the bullfrogs. Their belching is my dumping sound more hoarsely heard near at hand. What imperturbable fellows! One sits perfectly still behind some blades of grass while the dog is chasing others within two feet. Some are quite handsome, large, spotted fellows. We see here and there light-colored greenish-white spots on the bottom where a fish, a bream perhaps, has picked away all the dead wood and leaves for her nest over a space of eighteen inches or more. Young breams from one to three

[1] [*Walden*, p. 221; Riv. 312.] [2] [*Ibid.*]

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inches long, light-colored and transparent, are swimming about, and here and there a leech in the shallow water, moving as serpents are represented to do. Large devil's-needles are buzzing back and forth. They skim along the edge of the blue flags, apparently quite round this cove or further, like hen-harriers beating the bush for game. And now comes a hummingbird humming from the woods and alights on the blossom of a blue flag. The bullfrogs begin with one or two notes and with each peal add another trill to their trump, — *er-roonk*, *er-er-roonk*, *er-er-er-roonk*, etc. I am amused to hear one after another, and then an unexpectedly deep and confident bass, as if he had charged himself with more wind than the rest. And now, as if by a general agreement, they all trump together, making a deafening noise. Sometimes one jumps up a foot out of water in the midst of these concerts. What are they about? Suddenly a tree-toad in the overhanging woods begins, and another answers, and another, with loud, ringing notes such as I never heard before, and in three minutes they are all silent again. A red-eye sings on a tree-top, and a cuckoo is heard far in the wood. These are the evening sounds.

As we look over the water now, the opposite woods are seen dimly through what appears not so much the condensing dew and mist as the dry haziness of the afternoon, now settled and condensed. The woods on the opposite shore have not the distinctness they had an hour before, but perhaps a more agreeable dimness, a sort of gloaming or settling and thickening of the haze over the water, which melts

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tree into tree and masses them agreeably. The trees no longer bright and distinct, — a bluish mistiness. This appears to be an earlier gloaming before sunset, such as by and by is universal.

Went through the woods along the old canal to Haynes's pasture, from the height of which we looked down on the rich New Hampshire wood we had come out of. The ground rising within the wood gave it the appearance of woods rising by successive stages from a smaller growth on the edge to stately trees in the middle, and Nobscot was seen in the southwest through the blue furnace mist. This seems the true hour to be abroad sauntering far from home. Your thoughts being already turned toward home, your walk in one sense ended, you are in that favorable frame of mind described by De Quincey, open to great impressions, and you see those rare sights with the unconscious side of the eye, which you could not see by a direct gaze before. Then the dews begin to descend in your mind, and its atmosphere is strained of all impurities; and home is farther away than ever. Here is home; the beauty of the world impresses you. There is a coolness in your mind as in a well. Life is too grand for supper.

The wood thrush launches forth his evening strains from the midst of the pines. I admire the moderation of this master. There is nothing tumultuous in his song. He launches forth one strain with all his heart and life and soul, of pure and unmatchable melody, and then he pauses and gives the hearer and himself time to digest this, and then another and another at

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suitable intervals. Men talk of the *rich* song of other birds, — the thrasher, mockingbird, nightingale. But I doubt, I doubt. They know not what they say! There is as great an interval between the thrasher and the wood thrush as between Thomson's "Seasons" and Homer. The sweetness of the day crystallizes in this morning coolness.

Probably the tortoise leaves her eggs thus near the surface and in sand that they may receive the greatest heat from the sand, being just deep enough for the sand to receive and retain it and not part with it at night, — not so deep as to be cool.

June 15. A great fog this morning.

P. M. — To Trillium Woods.

Clover now in its prime. What more luxuriant than a clover-field? The poorest soil that is covered with it looks incomparably fertile. This is perhaps the most characteristic feature of June, resounding with the hum of insects. It is so massive, such a blush on the fields. The rude health of the sorrel cheek has given place to the blush of clover. Painters are wont, in their pictures of Paradise, to strew the ground too thickly with flowers. There should be moderation in all things. Though we love flowers, we do not want them so thick under our feet that we cannot walk without treading on them. But a clover-field in bloom is some excuse for them.

The *Prinos lævigatus*, it seems to be, probably the 14th, though it seems to have three or four pistils, if any, and six to nine stamens and petals. A small

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wheel-shaped white flower. The peduncles are sometimes branched and have two flowers. *Mitchella repens* just bursting, say to-day. Rose-bugs for a day or two. Here is one on a *Viburnum nudum* var. *pyrifolium* (?). A strong southerly wind blows.

Here are many wild roses northeast of Trillium Woods. We are liable to underrate this flower on account of its commonness. Is it not the queen of our flowers? How ample and high-colored its petals, glancing half concealed from its own green bowers! There is a certain noble and delicate civility about it, — not wildness. It is properly the type of the *Rosaceæ*, or flowers among others of most wholesome fruits. It is at home in the garden, as readily cultivated as apples. It is the pride of June. In summing up its attractions I should mention its rich color, size, and form, the rare beauty of its bud, its fine fragrance, and the beauty of the entire shrub, not to mention the almost innumerable varieties it runs into. I bring home the buds ready to expand, put them in a pitcher of water, and the next morning they open and fill my chamber with fragrance. This, found in the wilderness, must have reminded the Pilgrim of home.

Strawberries in the meadow now ready for the picker. They lie deep at the roots of the grass in the shade; else they are dried up. You spread aside the tall grass, and deep down in little cavities by the roots of the grass you find this rich fruit. But it is only a taste we get here. 5 P. M., I hear distinctly the sound of thunder in the northwest, but not a cloud is in sight, only a little thickness or mistiness in that horizon, and

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Wild Roses

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we get no shower. For a week past I have heard the cool, watery note of the goldfinch, from time to time, as it twittered past.

June 16. 4 A. M. — To Nawshawtuct by boat.

No fog this morning and scarcely any dew except in the lowest ground. There is a little air stirring, too; the breeze in the night must have been the reason. It threatens to be a hot, as well as dry, day, and gardens begin to suffer.

Before 4 A. M., or sunrise, the sound of chip-birds and robins and bluebirds, etc., fills the air and is incessant. It is a crowing on the roost, methinks, as the cock crows before he goes abroad. They do not sing deliberately as at eve, but greet the morning with an incessant twitter. Even the crickets seem to join the concert. Yet I think it is not the same every morning, though it may be fair. An hour or two later it is comparative silence. The awaking of the birds, a tumultuous twittering.

At sunrise, however, a slight mist curls along the surface of the water. When the sun falls on it, it looks like a red dust.

What is that tall rank grass now in bloom, four or five feet high, with an upright pyramidal spike, which some time ago I mistook for wild rice? [1] It stands amid the button-bushes on the edge of the river; leafy except the upper foot.

From top of the hill, the sun, just above the horizon, red and shorn of beams, is somewhat pear-shaped,

[1] Canary grass.

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owing to some irregularity in the refraction of the lower strata, produced, as it were, by the dragging of the lower part; and then it becomes a broad ellipse, the lower half a dun red, owing to the grossness of the air. It appears as if it rose in the northeast, — over Ball's Hill at any rate. The distant river is like molten silver at this hour; it merely reflects the *light*, not the blue. I hear the *meow* of Shaw's peacock here, very loud. What shall I name that small cloud that attends the sun's rising, that hangs over the portals of the day like an embroidered banner and heralds his coming, though sometimes it proves a portcullis which falls and cuts off the new day in its birth?

Bathed in Assabet at Leaning Hemlocks and examined the stone-heaps, now partly exposed to the air, but found nothing. Found four tortoises' deposits on the high bank there just robbed and the eggs devoured. He had not emptied the yolk out of one. The holes had been made exactly in all respects like that I have described. Some were put in pure sand. There were others which had been robbed some days. Apparently about three eggs to each. Presently I saw a skunk making off, — undoubtedly the robber, — with an undulating motion, a white streak above and a parallel and broader black one below (?). A tick in woods by White Pond yesterday. A sweet-briar, apparently yesterday. The locusts on the hill are still white with blossoms, which also strew the ground far and wide as if a sleety snow had fallen, and also adhere to the trees. They resound with the hum of insects even at 5 A. M.

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Coming along near the celtis I heard a singular sound as of a bird in distress amid the bushes, and turned to relieve it. Next thought it a squirrel in an apple tree barking at me. Then found that it came from a hole in the ground under my feet, a loud sound between a grunting and a wheezing, yet not unlike the sound a red squirrel sometimes makes, but louder. Looking down the hole, I saw the tail and hind quarters of a woodchuck, which seemed to be contending with another further down. Reaching down carefully, I took hold of the tail, and, though I had to pull very hard indeed, I drew him out between the rocks, a bouncing great fat fellow, and tossed him a little way down the hill. As soon as he recovered from his bewilderment he made for the hole again, but, I barring the way, he ran off elsewhere.

Coming down the river, heard opposite the new houses, where I stopped to pluck the tall grass, a sound as of young blackbirds amid the button-bushes. After a long while gazing, standing on the roots of the button-bushes, I detected a couple of meadow or mud hens (*Rallus Virginianus*) gliding about under the button-bushes over the mud and through the shallow water, and uttering a squeaking or squawking note, as if they had a nest there or young. Bodies about the size of a robin; short tail; wings and tail white-edged; bill about one and a half inches long, orange beneath in one bird; brown, deepening into black spots above; turtle-dove color on breasts and beneath; ashy about eyes and cheeks. Seemed not willing to fly, and for a long time unwilling to pass

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me, because it must come near to keep under the button-bushes.

An old man who used to frequent Walden fifty-five years ago, when it was dark with surrounding forests, tells me that in those days he sometimes saw it all alive with ducks and other game. He went there to fish and used an old log canoe, made of two white pine logs dug out and pinned together and pitched, which he found on the shore. It was very clumsy but durable and belonged to the pond. He did not know whom it belonged to; it belonged to the pond. He used to make a cable for his anchor of hickory bark tied together. An old man, a potter, who lived in these woods before the Revolution, told him that there was an iron chest at the bottom of the pond, and he had seen it. It would sometimes come floating up toward the shore, and, when you went toward it, go back into deep water and disappear.[1]

P. M. — To Baker Farm by boat.

The yellowish or greenish orchis out, maybe a day or two. It would be a very warm afternoon, if there were not so good a breeze from the southwest. The *Ranunculus Purshii* begins to show now in large fields in shallow water, both on shore and in middle, the river having gone down lately. The *Ranunculus filiformis* is out a day or two, delayed by the height of the water. *Comarum palustre*, some time; *vide* twenty or thirty rods above the Hubbard Bridge; an interesting leaf.

[1] [*Walden*, pp. 211, 212; Riv. 298, 299.]

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Was that a smaller bittern or a meadow-hen that we started from out the button-bushes? What places for the mud-hen beneath the wild stems of the button-bushes along the shore, all shaggy with rootlets, as if all the weeds the river produced — all the ranunculus at least — had drifted and lodged against them. Their stems are so nearly horizontal near the mud and water that you can clamber along on them over the water many rods. It is one of the wildest features in our scenery. There is scarcely any firm footing on the ground except where a muskrat has made a heap of clamshells. Picture the river at a low stage of the water, the pads shrivelled in the sun hanging from the dark-brown stems of the button-bush, which are all shaggy with masses of dark rootlets, an impenetrable thicket, and a stake-driver, or *Ardea minor*, sluggishly winging his way up the stream.

The breams' nests, like large deep milk-pans, are left high and dry on the shore. They are not only deepened within, but have raised edges. In some places, as at the boat place at the Baker Farm, they are as close together as they can stick, with each a great bream in it, whose waving fins and tail are tipped with a sort of phosphorescent luminousness.

Saw in the meadow there a more than double side-saddle-flower, — a monster, though not in size. The exterior calyx was of five or six small greenish leaves of different sizes, and others smaller were continued irregularly nearly two inches down the stem. The interior calyx consisted of, not one only, but four, rows of narrower leaves than usual. Petals were none, *now*

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at least, it being late, and the stigma, instead of being one, broad and flat, was of half a dozen erectish crimped green leaves. I should have mentioned the rich salmon-brown (is it?), sort of iron-rust color, of the fields of potamogeton, now that the river is low, with its spikes of flowers just rising above the water and the large, semitransparent radical leaves now floating on the surface, here and there. What a rapid and luxuriant growth of weeds along the shore! overtopped by that tall rank grass I mentioned yesterday, now in flower (?).[1] The polygonums are reddish.

We sailed all the way back from the Baker Farm, though the wind blew very nearly at right angles with the river much of the way. By sitting on one side of the boat we made its edge serve for a keel, so that she would mind her helm. The dog swam for long distances behind us. Each time we passed under the lee of a wood we were becalmed and then met with contrary and flawy winds till we got fairly beyond its influence. But you can always sail either up or down the river, for the wind inclines to blow with the stream, especially where the banks are high. We taste at each cool spring with which we are acquainted in the bank, making haste to reach it before the dog, who otherwise is sure to be found cooling himself in it. We sometimes use him on board to sit in the stern and trim the boat while we both row, for he is heavy, and otherwise we sink the bows too much in the water. But he has a habit of standing too near the rower, and each time receiving a fillip under the chin from the

[1] *Phalaris.*

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rower's fists. So at last he tumbles himself overboard and takes a riparial excursion. And we are amused to see how judiciously he selects his points for crossing the river from time to time, in order to avoid long circuits made by bays and meadows and keep as near us as possible.

At Bittern Cliff, on the south side, the little earth on the rocks is already parched and the shrubs are withering with drought. The spring is long since past there. Found there the *Potentilla arguta*, — crowded cinquefoil, — well out, *our* only white cinquefoil; stem and leaves somewhat like the *Norvegica*, but more woolly, a yellowish white. According to Bigelow, rare. Also there a *Galium trifidum* var. *tinctorium* (?). I see some red maple leaves with the points of the three principal lobes covered with that crimson frosting which I saw some time since on the black birch.

June 17. *Friday.* Another breezy night and no fog this morning. The pogonias, adder's-tongue arethusas, I see nowadays, getting to be numerous, are far too pale to compete with the *A. bulbosa*, and then their snake-like odor is much against them.

Fresh mackerel for some days past.

Here have been three ultra-reformers, lecturers on Slavery, Temperance, the Church, etc., in and about our house and Mrs. Brooks's the last three or four days, — A. D. Foss, once a Baptist minister in Hopkinton, N. H.; Loring Moody, a sort of travelling pattern-working chaplain; and H. C. Wright, who shocks all the old women with his infidel writings.

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Though Foss was a stranger to the others, you would have thought them old and familiar cronies. (They happened here together by accident.) They addressed each other constantly by their Christian names, and rubbed you continually with the greasy cheeks of their kindness. They would not keep their distance, but cuddle up and lie spoon-fashion with you, no matter how hot the weather nor how narrow the bed,[1] — chiefly[2] ——. I was awfully pestered with his benignity; feared I should get greased all over with it past restoration; tried to keep some starch in my clothes. He wrote a book called "A Kiss for a Blow," and he behaved as if there were no alternative between these, or as if I had given him a blow. I would have preferred the blow, but he was bent on giving me the kiss, when there was neither quarrel nor agreement between us. I wanted that he should straighten his back, smooth out those ogling wrinkles of benignity about his eyes, and, with a healthy reserve, pronounce something in a downright manner. It was difficult to keep clear of his slimy benignity, with which he sought to cover you before he swallowed you and took you fairly into his bowels.[3] It would have been far worse than the fate of Jonah. I do not wish to get any nearer to a man's bowels than usual. They lick you as a cow her calf. They would fain wrap you about with their bowels. —— addressed me as "Henry" within one minute from the time I first laid eyes on

[1] [Channing, p. 29.]

[2] ["Chiefly" is crossed out in pencil and "wholly" substituted.]

[3] [Channing, p. 29.]

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him, and when I spoke, he said with drawling, sultry sympathy, "Henry, I know all you would say; I understand you perfectly; you need not explain anything to me;" [1] and to another, "I am going to dive into Henry's inmost depths." I said, "I trust you will not strike your head against the bottom." He could tell in a dark room, with his eyes blinded and in perfect stillness, if there was one there whom he loved. One of the most attractive things about the flowers is their beautiful reserve. The truly beautiful and noble puts its lover, as it were, at an infinite distance, while it attracts him more strongly than ever. I do not like the men who come so near me with their bowels. It is the most disagreeable kind of snare to be caught in. Men's bowels are far more slimy than their brains. They must be ascetics indeed who approach you by this side. What a relief to have heard the ring of one healthy reserved tone! With such a forgiving disposition, as if he were all the while forgiving you for existing. Considering our condition or *habit* of soul, — maybe corpulent and asthmatic, — maybe dying of atrophy, with all our bones sticking out, — is it kindness to embrace a man? They lay their sweaty hand on your shoulder, or your knee, to magnetize you.

I loved to hear of the old log canoe, which perchance had first been a tree on its brink, and then, as it were, fell into the water, to float there for a generation as the only proper vessel for it, — very thick and at length water-logged. So primitive a vessel! I remember that when I first paddled on it there were more large trunks

[1] [Channing, p. 29.]

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of trees to be seen indistinctly lying on the bottom, which had probably blown over formerly, when the trees were larger, or had been left on the ice at the last cutting, when wood was cheaper; but now for the most part they have disappeared. The old log canoe, which took the place of a more graceful one of Indian construction.[1]

Now the trunks of trees on the bottom and the old log canoe are gone, the dark surrounding woods are gone, and the villagers, who scarcely know how it lies, instead of going to the pond to bathe or drink, are thinking to bring its water to the village in a pipe, to form a reservoir as high as the roofs of the houses, to wash their dishes and be their scullion, — which should be more sacred than the Ganges, — to earn their Walden by the turning of a cock or drawing of a plug, as they draw cider from a cask. The Boiling Spring is turned into a tank for the Iron Horse to drink at, and the Walden woods have been cut and dried for his fodder. That devilish Iron Horse, whose ear-rending whinner is heard throughout the town, has defiled the Boiling Spring with his feet and drunk it up, and browsed off all the wood around the pond. He has got a taste for berries even, and with unnatural appetite he robs the country babies of milk, with the breath of his nostrils polluting the air. That Trojan horse, with a thousand men in his belly, insidiously introduced by mercenary Greeks. With the scream of a hawk he beats the bush for men, the man-harrier, and carries them to his infernal home by thousands for

[1] [*Walden*, p. 212; Riv. 299, 300.]

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his progeny. Where is the country's champion, the Moore of Moore Hall, to meet him at the Deep Cut and throw a victorious and avenging lance against this bloated pest? [1]

The dense fields of blue-eyed grass now blue the meadows, as if, in this fair season of the year, the clouds that envelop the earth were dispersing, and blue patches began to appear, answering to the blue sky. The eyes pass from these blue patches into the surrounding green as from the patches of clear sky into the clouds.

If a man walks in the woods for love of them and [to] see his fellows with impartial eye afar, for half his days, he is esteemed a loafer; but if he spends his whole day as a speculator, shearing off those woods, he is esteemed industrious and enterprising — making earth bald before its time.[2]

Amelanchier berries begin to be red, and softer and eatable, though not ripe.

P. M. — To Walden.

I did not mention yesterday the great devil's-needle with his humped back, which hovered over the boat and, though headed across its course, and not appearing to fly in the direction in which the boat was moving, yet preserved his relation to the boat perfectly. What steamer can reverse its paddle-wheels as he can?

A remarkably strong south wind this afternoon, and cool. The greenness about the edge of Walden is very

[1] [*Walden*, pp. 213, 214; Riv. 301, 302.]

[2] [*Cape Cod, and Miscellanies*, p. 457; *Misc.*, Riv. 256.]

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striking when seen from the Peak nowadays. Is it in the fall?

One of the nighthawk's eggs is hatched. The young is unlike any that I have seen, exactly like a pinch of rabbit's fur or down of that color dropped on the ground, not two inches long, with a dimpling or geometrical or somewhat regular arrangement of minute feathers in the middle, destined to become the wings and tail. Yet even it half opened its eye, and peeped if I mistake not. Was ever bird more completely protected, both by the color of its eggs and of its own body that sits on them, and of the young bird just hatched? Accordingly the eggs and young are rarely discovered. There was one egg still, and by the side of it this little pinch of down, flattened out and not observed at first, and a foot down the hill had rolled a half of the egg it came out of. There was no callowness, as in the young of most birds. It seemed a singular place for a bird to begin its life, — to come out of its egg, — this little pinch of down, — and lie still on the exact spot where the egg lay, on a flat exposed shelf on the side of a bare hill, with nothing but the whole heavens, the broad universe above, to brood it when its mother was away.

How happens it that the tortoises frequently drop their eggs on the surface of the ground? I believe they are sometimes a bluish white. The leaves of some young oaks — red apparently and perhaps black — are a very rich dark green now, so dark that, if we had seen them a month ago and contrasted them with those then expanding, we should have exclaimed at

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the difference. Our eyes are gradually prepared for it. The huckleberry-apple is sometimes a red shoot, with tender and *thick* red leaves and branchlets, in all three inches long. It is, as it were, a monstrous precocity, and what should have waited to become fruit is a merely bloated or puffed-up flower. A child with a great dropsical head, and prematurely bright, is a huckleberry-apple. The really sweet and palatable huckleberry is not matured before July, and incurs the risk of drying up rather in droughts and never attaining its proper size. The indigo out. There are some fine large clusters of lambkill close to the shore of Walden under the Peak, fronting the south. They are early there and large, apparently both on account of the warmth and the vicinity of the water. These flowers are in perfect cylinders, sometimes six inches long by two wide, and three such raying out or upward from one centre, *i. e.* three branches clustered together. Examined close by, I think this handsomer than the mountain laurel which we have; the color is richer, but they do not show so well at a little distance, and the corymbs are somewhat concealed by the green shoot and leaves rising above them, and also injured by the mixture of the dry remains of last year's flowers.

The mountain laurel by Walden in its prime. It is a splendid flower, and more red than that in Mason's pasture. Its dry, dead-looking, brittle stems, as it were leaning over other bushes or each other, bearing at the ends great dense corymbs five inches in diameter of rose or pink (*?*) tinged flowers, without an inter-

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stice between them, overlapping each other, each often more than an inch in diameter. A single one of which would be esteemed very beautiful. It is a highlander wandered down into the plain. The *Lactuca elongata*, with a reddish stem.

June 18. *Saturday.* 4 A. M. — By boat to Nawshawtuct; to Azalea Spring, or Pinxter Spring.

No fog and very little dew, or perhaps it was a slight rain in the night. I find always some dew in low ground. There is a broad crescent of clear sky in the west, but it looks rainy in the east. As yet we are disappointed of rain. Almost all birds appear to join the early morning chorus before sunrise on the roost, the matin hymn. I hear now the robin, the chip-bird, the blackbird, the martin, etc., etc., but I see none flying, or, at last, only one wing in the air, not yet illustrated by the sun.

As I was going up the hill, I was surprised to see rising above the June-grass, near a walnut, a whitish object, like a stone with a white top, or a skunk erect, for it was black below. It was an enormous toadstool, or fungus, a sharply conical parasol in the form of a sugar loaf, slightly turned up at the edges, which were rent half an inch in every inch or two. The whole height was sixteen inches. The pileus or cap was six inches long by seven in width at the rim, though it appeared longer than wide. There was no veil, and the stem was about one inch in diameter and naked. The top of the cap was quite white within and without, hoariest at top of the cone like a mountain-top, not smooth but with [a] stringy kind of scales turned up-

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ward at the edge, which declined downward, *i. e.* down the cap, into a coarse hoariness, as if the compact white fibres had been burst by the spreading of the gills and showed the black. As you looked up within, the light was transmitted between the trembling gills. It looked much like an old felt hat [that] is pushed up into a cone and its rim all ragged and with some meal shaken on to it; in fact, it was almost big enough for a child's head. It was so delicate and fragile that its whole cap trembled on the least touch, and, as I could not lay it down without injuring it, I was obliged to carry it home all the way in my hand and erect, while I paddled my boat with one hand. It was a wonder how its soft cone ever broke through the earth. Such growths ally our age to former periods, such as geology reveals. I wondered if it had not some relation to the skunk, though not in odor, yet in its colors and the general impression it made. It suggests a vegetative force which may almost make man tremble for his dominion. It carries me back to the era of the formation of the coal-measures — the age of the saurus and pleiosaurus and when bullfrogs were as big as bulls. Its stem had something massy about it like an oak, large in proportion to the weight it had to support (though not perhaps to the size of the cap), like the vast hollow columns under some piazzas, whose caps have hardly weight enough to hold their tops together. It made you think of parasols of Chinese mandarins; or it might have been used by the great fossil bullfrog in his walks. What part does it play in the economy of the world?

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I see the curled fragments of some larger turtle's egg-shells on the high bank of the North River, near a cavity, proportionally large, in the black earth, where was once a coal pit. Was it not a mud turtle? They are more dusky-spotted. The panicled andromeda. The mullein yesterday. It bears inspection; is a rich yellow flower with dark-orange anthers, opening now in rings of five or six large flowers one inch in diameter around the spike, the next row of buds above just showing yellowish through downy floral leaves, like the saffron dawn through twilight clouds.

I have just been out (7.30 A. M.) to show my fungus. The milkman and the butcher followed me to inquire what it was, and children and young ladies addressed me in the street who never spoke to me before. It is so fragile I was obliged to walk at a funereal pace for fear of jarring it. It is so delicately balanced on its stem that it falls to one side across it on the least inclination; falls about like an umbrella that has lost its stays. It is rapidly curling up on the edge, and the rents increasing, until it is completely fringed, and is an inch wider there. It is melting in the sun and light, and black drops and streams falling on my hand and fragments of the black fringed rim falling on the sidewalk. Evidently such a plant can only be seen in perfection in the early morning. It is a creature of the night, like the great moths. They wish me to send it to the first of a series of exhibitions of flowers and fruits to be held at the court-house this afternoon, which I promise to do if it is presentable then. Perhaps it might be placed in the court-house cellar and the

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company be invited at last to walk down and examine it. Think of placing this giant parasol fungus in the midst of all their roses; yet they admit that it would overshadow and eclipse them all. It is to be remarked that this grew, not in low and damp soil, but high up on the open side of a dry hill, about two rods from a walnut and one from a wall, in the midst of and rising above the thin June-grass. The last night was warm; the earth was very dry, and there was a slight sprinkling of rain.

I believe the 14th was the first day I began to wear my single thin sack in my walk and at night sleep with both windows open; say, when the swamp-pink opens. The locust is done, and its shrivelled dirty-white petals cover the ground between the blades of grass like a crusting or sugaring of snow. Meadow-rue, with a rank, offensive smell like a strong-smelling dog. The floating-heart in river like a minute white lily, now at 5 A. M. Swamp blackberry probably now.

I think the blossom of the sweet-briar, now in prime, — eglantine, — is more delicate and interesting than that of the common roses, though smaller and paler and without their spicy fragrance; but its fragrance is in its leaves all summer, and the form of the bush is handsomer, curving over from a considerable height in wreaths sprinkled with numerous flowers. They open out flat soon after sunrise. Flowers whitish in middle, then pinkish-rose inclining to purple toward the edges.

The laurel of many varieties. I have now three

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differently marked or colored. Some a delicate calico, — a new print just washed and starched for a morning dress.

Carrion-flower now abundant. At first this morning there was no mist whatever, even on the water, but it was all smooth and dark; but when the sun fell on it a very slight vapor curled along it.

How far from our minds now the early blossoms of the spring, the willow catkins, for example!

I put the parasol fungus in the cellar to preserve it, but it went on rapidly melting and wasting away from the edges upward, spreading as it dissolved, till it was shaped like a dish cover. By night, though kept in the cellar all the day, there was not more than two of the six inches of the height of the cap left, and the barrel-head beneath it and its own stem looked as if a large bottle of ink had been broken there. It defiled all it touched. The next morning the hollow stem was left perfectly bare, and only the hoary apex of the cone, spreading about two inches in diameter, lay on the ground beneath. Probably one night produced it, and in one day, with all our pains, it wasted away. Is it not a giant mildew or mould? In the warm, muggy night the surface of the earth is mildewed. The mould, which is the flower of humid darkness and ignorance. The Pyramids and other monuments of Egypt are a vast mildew or toadstools which have met with no light of day sufficient to waste them away. Slavery is such a mould, and superstition, — which are most rank in the warm and humid portions of the globe. Luxor sprang up one night out of the slime

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of the Nile. The humblest, puniest weed that can endure the sun is thus superior to the largest fungus, as is the peasant's cabin to those foul temples. It is a temple consecrated to Apis. All things flower, both vices and virtues, but the one is essentially foul, the other fair. In hell, toadstools should be represented as overshadowing men. The priest is the fungus of the graveyard, the mildew of the tomb. In the animal world there are toads and lizards.

P. M. — To Island by boat.

The first white lily to-day perhaps. It is the only *bud* I have seen. The river has gone down and left it nearly dry. On the Island, where a month ago plants were so fresh and early, it is now parched and crisp under my feet, and I feel the heat reflected from the ground and the dry scent of grass and leaves. So universally on dry and rocky hills where the spring was earliest, the autumn has already commenced. The panicled cornel, a day or two. Cranberry also a day or two, with its dry-looking curled flower. Found the nest of a cuckoo, — a long, slender, handsome bird, probably St. Domingo cuckoo, — at the edge of the meadow on a bent sallow, not in a crotch, covered by the broad, shining leaves of a swamp white oak, whose boughs stretched over it, two feet or more from the ground. The nest was made of dry twigs and was small for the size of the bird and very shallow, but handsomely lined with an abundance of what looked like the dry yellowish-brown (?) catkins of the hickory, which made a pleasing contrast with the

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surrounding grayish twigs. There were some worm-eaten green leaves inwoven. It contained a single greenish-white elliptical egg, an inch or more long. The bird flew off a little way and *clow-clow-clowed.*

At the Flower Exhibition, saw the rhododendron plucked yesterday in Fitzwilliam, N. H. It was the earliest to be found there, and only one bud yet fully open. They say it is in perfection there the 4th of July, nearer Monadnock than the town. Bigelow says "the flowers form a terminal cluster or thyrsus immediately above the leaves," and, before expansion, form "a large compound bud, resembling a strobilus or cone." These buds are very remarkable. *These* flowers were, I should say, a very pale rose-color, with permanent greenish spots on one side, as of fallen pollen. In the midst of such a profusion of roses, etc., I could not discriminate its odor well. It cannot be very remarkable in this respect.

This unexpected display of flowers culled from the gardens of the village suggests how many virtues also are cultivated by the villagers, more than meet the eye.

It would be an interesting subject, — the materials with which different birds line their nests, or, more generally, *construct* them. The hickory catkins, etc., of the cuckoo, the hypnum and large nest of the phœbe.

Saw to-night Lewis the blind man's horse, which works on the sawing-machine at the depot, now let out to graze along the road, but at each step he lifts his hind legs convulsively high from the ground, as

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if the whole earth were a treadmill continually slipping away from under him while he climbed its convex surface. It was painful to witness, but it was symbolical of the moral condition of his master and of all artisans in contradistinction from artists, all who are engaged in any routine; for to them also the whole earth is a treadmill, and the routine results instantly in a similar painful deformity. The horse may bear the mark of his servitude on the muscles of his legs, the man on his brow.

8.30 P. M. — To Cliffs.

Moon not quite full. Going across Depot Field. The western sky is now a crescent of saffron inclining to salmon, a little dunnish, perhaps. The grass is wet with dew. The evening star has come out, but no other. There is no wind. I see a nighthawk in the twilight, flitting near the ground. I hear the hum of a beetle going by. The greenish fires of lightning-bugs are already seen in the meadow. I almost lay my hand on one amid the leaves as I get over the fence at the brook. I pass through Hubbardston [*sic*] along the side of a field of oats, which wet one leg. I perceive the smell of a burning far off by the river, which I saw smoking two days ago. The moon is laboring in a mackerel cloud, and my hopes are with her. Why do I hear no bullfrogs yet? Do they ever trump as early and as universally as on that their first evening? I hear the whip-poor-wills on different sides. White flowers alone show much at night, — white clover and whiteweed. It is commonly still at night, as now. The

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day has gone by with its wind like the wind of a cannon-ball, and now far in the west it blows. By that dun-colored sky you may track it. There is no motion nor sound in the woods (Hubbard's Grove) along which I am walking. The trees stand like great screens against the sky. The distant village sounds are the barking of dogs, that animal with which man has allied himself, and the rattling of wagons, for the farmers have gone into town a-shopping this Saturday night. The dog is the tamed wolf, as the villager is the tamed savage. But near, the crickets are heard in the grass, chirping from everlasting to everlasting, a mosquito sings near my ear, and the humming of a dor-bug drowns all the noise of the village, so roomy is the universe.[1] The moon comes out of the mackerel cloud, and the traveller rejoices. How can a man write the same thoughts by the light of the moon, resting his book on a rail by the side of a remote potato-field, that he does by the light of the sun, on his study table? The light is but a luminousness. My pencil seems to move through a creamy, mystic medium. The moonlight is rich and somewhat opaque, like cream, but the daylight is thin and blue, like skimmed milk. I am less conscious than in the presence of the sun; my instincts have more influence. I love the smell of that burning as a man may his pipe. It reminds me of a new country offering sites for the hearths of men. It is cheering as the scent of the peat fire of the first settler. The farmer has improved the dry weather to burn his meadow.

[1] [Channing, p. 78.]

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Might not rivers receive more various names? This now at length resounds with the trump of the bullfrog. Might it not be Bullfrog River, as we have "frog ponds" — it is one long frog pond — or Lily River? Those swift rivers like the Nashua have few bullfrogs or lilies, I suspect.

The moon is threatened by some mares'-tails. At Potter's sand-bank, the sand, though cold on the surface, commences to be warm two inches beneath, and the warmth reaches at least six inches deeper. The tortoise buries her eggs just deep enough to secure this greatest constant warmth. I hear a huckleberry-bird now at half past nine. In Potter's low pasture, I pass through a cold stratum full of dewy fragrance and invigorating as the springy sides of mountains, but I soon again rise out of this cool basin. You pass through these refrigerators just as you would wade through a lake or at the bottom of a sea. I passed into and along the bottom of a lake of cold and dewy evening air. Anon, rising higher, here comes a puff of warm air, trivially warm, a straggler from the sun's retinue, now buffeted about by the vanguard night breezes. Tephrosia, a day or two. Before me, southward toward the moon, on higher land than I, but springy, I saw a low film of fog like a veil reflecting the moonlight, though none on lower ground which was not springy, and, up the river beyond, a battalion of fog rising white in the moonlight in ghost-like wisps, or like a flock of scared covenanters in a recess amid the hills. The loudest sound produced by man that I hear now is that of a train of cars passing through

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the town. The evening air is so favorable to the conveyance of sound that a sudden whistle or scream of the engine just startled me as much as it does near at hand, though I am nearly two miles distant from it. Passed two silent horses grazing in the orchard, and then a skunk prowling on the open hillside, probably probing for insects, etc. Though twenty or thirty feet off he stops repeatedly, erects his tail, and prepares to receive me. How he trusts in his weapon! Fair Haven Pond, seen now indistinctly in the moonlight, seems reduced to a shining surface of mud and slimy puddles, yet I distinguish a smoother and lighter sheen from its broad padded border. The oak leaves, as I look down this vista from the first rock, glisten in the moonlight, though not wet. Will they glisten thus in the fall?

The chief sounds now are the bullfrogs and the whip-poor-wills. The *er-er-roonk* of the bullfrog actually sounds now without a pause from one end of this river to the other, and can be heard more than a mile on each side. I hear the beat of a partridge also. Is it not a result of the white man's intrusion and a sign of the wildness of the bird, that it is compelled to employ thus the night as well as the day? Though frogs and crickets and gnats fill the air with sound, these horses, great beasts as they are, I cannot detect by any sound they make, but by their forms against the sky. The Cliff rocks are warm to the hand. It is probably after ten. I just came through a moonlit glade in the woods on the side of the hill, where an aspen (*Populus grandidentata*) trembled and betrayed a rising wind. A cuckoo

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I just heard, an imperfect note, and a wagon going over a bridge, I know not where. It is soon over, and the horse's hoofs and the wheels are no longer heard. That small segment of the arc which the traveller described is remarkably distinguished. Might not a policeman be stationed on a central hill at night, and when any robbery was committed, be notified of it by telegraph if possible, and so hear by what bridge the rogue left the town?

The night-warbler, and again afterward. It is worth the while to walk thus in the night after a warm or sultry day to enjoy the fresh up-country, brake-like, springlike scent in low grounds. At night the surface of the earth is a cellar, a refrigerator, no doubt wholesomer than those made with ice by day.

Got home at eleven.

June 19. P. M. — To Flint's Pond.

I see large patches of blue-eyed grass in the meadow across the river from my window. The pine woods at Thrush Alley emit that hot dry scent, reminding me even of days when I used to go a-blackberrying. The air is full of the hum of invisible insects, and I hear a locust. Perhaps this sound indicates the time to put on a thin coat. But the wood thrush sings as usual far in the wood. A blue jay and a tanager come dashing into the pine under which I stand. The first flies directly away, screaming with suspicion or disgust, but the latter, more innocent, remains. The cuckoo is heard, too, in the depths of the wood. Heard my night-warbler on a solitary white pine in the Heywood

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Clearing by the Peak. Discovered it at last, looking like a small piece of black bark curving partly over the limb. No fork to its tail. It appeared black beneath; was very shy, not bigger than a yellowbird, and very slender.

In the middle of the path to Wharf Rock at Flint's Pond, the nest of a Wilson's thrush, five or six inches high, between the green stems of three or four golden-rods, made of dried grass or fibres of bark, with dry oak leaves attached loosely, making the whole nine or ten inches wide, to deceive the eye. Two blue eggs. Like an accidental heap. Who taught it to do thus? *Lobelia Dortmanna*, a day or two at most. No grass balls yet. That fine-rooted green plant on bottom sends up stems with black heads three or four inches. Do they become white? Every one who has waded about the shores of a pond must have been surprised to find how much warmer the water was close to the shore, where only three or four inches deep, than a little further out. I think I saw a young crow now fully grown.

Returned by Smith's Hill and the Saw Mill Brook. Got quite a parcel of strawberries on the hill. The hellebore leaves by the brook are already half turned yellow. Plucked one blue early blueberry. The strain of the bobolink now begins to sound a little rare. It never again fills the air as the first week after its arrival. At this season we apprehend no long storm, only showers with or without thunder.

June 20. *Monday.* 4 A. M. — No fog; sky mostly overcast; drought continues. I heard the robin first (before

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the chip-bird) this morning. Heard the chip-bird last evening just after sunset.

10 A. M. — To Assabet Bathing-Place.

I see wood tortoises in the path; one feels full of eggs. Those great greenish-white puffs on the panicled andromeda are now decaying. On the swamp-pink they are solid. The pitchers of the comandra seed are conspicuous. Meadow-sweet out, probably yesterday. It is an agreeable, unpretending flower. Some of the stone nests are a foot above the water now, but uninjured. I can find nothing in them. The bosky bank shows bright roses from its green recesses; the small white flowers of the panicled andromeda; beneath, yellow lilies.

Found two lilies open in the very shallow inlet of the meadow. Exquisitely beautiful, and unlike anything else that we have, is the first white lily just expanded in some shallow lagoon where the water is leaving it, — perfectly fresh and pure, before the insects have discovered it. How admirable its purity! how innocently sweet its fragrance! How significant that the rich, black mud of our dead stream produces the water-lily, — out of that fertile slime springs this spotless purity! It is remarkable that those flowers which are most emblematical of purity should grow in the mud.

There is also the exquisite beauty of the small sagittaria, which I find out, maybe a day or two, — three transparent crystalline white petals with a yellow eye and as many *small* purplish calyx-leaves, four or five inches above the same mud.

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Coming home at twelve, I see that the white lilies are nearly shut. The river has been some days full with weeds which drape and trail from my oars — I am now on foot — (the potamogeton), as if it were Charon's boat, and this a funeral procession down the Cocytus.

8 P. M. — Up North River to Nawshawtuct.

The moon full. Perhaps there is no more beautiful scene than that on the North River seen from the rock this side the hemlocks. As we look up-stream, we see a crescent-shaped lake completely embosomed in the forest. There is nothing to be seen but the smooth black mirror of the water, on which there is now the slightest discernible bluish mist, a foot high, and thick-set alders and willows and the green woods without an interstice sloping steeply upward from its very surface, like the sides of a bowl. The river is here for half a mile completely shut in by the forest. One hemlock, which the current has undermined, has fallen over till it lies parallel with the water, a foot or two above it and reaching two thirds across the stream, its extremity curving upward to the light, now dead. Here it has been a year or two, and it has only taken the place of others which have successively fallen in and been carried away by the stream. One lies now cast up on the shore. Some wild roses, so pale now in the twilight that they look exactly like great blackberry blossoms. I think *these* would look so at midday.

Saw a little skunk coming up the river-bank in the woods at the White Oak, a funny little fellow, about

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six inches long and nearly as broad. It faced me and actually compelled me to retreat before it for five minutes. Perhaps I was between it and its hole. Its broad black tail, tipped with white, was erect like a kitten's. It had what looked like a broad white band drawn tight across its forehead or top-head, from which two lines of white ran down, one on each side of its back, and there was a narrow white line down its snout. It raised its back, sometimes ran a few feet forward, sometimes backward, and repeatedly turned its tail to me, prepared to discharge its fluid like the old. Such was its instinct. And all the while it kept up a fine grunting like a little pig or a squirrel. It reminded me that the red squirrel, the woodchuck, and the skunk all make a similar sound. Now there are young rabbits, skunks, and probably woodchucks.

Walking amid the bushes and the ferns just after moonrise, I am refreshed with many sweet scents which I cannot trace to their source. How the trees shoot! The tops of young pines toward the moon are covered with fine shoots some eighteen inches long. Will they grow much more this year? There is a peculiarly soft, creamy light round the moon, now it is low in the sky. The bullfrogs begin about 8.30. They lie at their length on the surface amid the pads. I touched one's nose with my finger, and he only gave a sudden froggish belch and moved a foot or two off. How hard to imitate their note exactly, — its sonorousness. Here, close by, it is like *er er ough, er er er ough*, with a sonorous trump which these letters do not suggest. On our return, having reached the reach

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by Merrick's pasture, we get the best view of the moon in the southeast, reflected in the water, on account of the length of the reach. The creamy light about it is also perfectly reflected; the path of insects on the surface between us and the moon is lit up like fire. The leafy-columned elms, planted by the river at foot of Prichard's field, are exceedingly beautiful, the moon being behind them, and I see that they are not too near together, though sometimes hardly a rod apart, their branches crossing and interlacing. Their trunks look like columns of a portico wreathed with evergreens on the evening of an illumination for some great festival. They are the more rich, because in this creamy light you cannot distinguish the trunk from the verdure that drapes it.

This is the most sultry night we have had. All windows and doors are open in the village and scarcely a lamp is lit. I pass many families sitting in their yards. The shadows of the trees and houses are too extended, now that the moon is low in the heavens, to show the richest tracery.

June 21. 4.30 A. M. — Up river for lilies.

No dew even where I keep my boat. The driest night yet, threatening the sultriest day. Yet I see big crystalline drops at the tips or the bases of the pontederia leaves. The few lilies begin to open about 5. The nest of a brown thrasher with three eggs, on some green-briar, perfectly concealed by a grape-vine running over it; eggs greenish-brown; nest of dry sticks, lined with fibres of grape bark and with roots. Bird

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scolded me much. Carpet-weed out. I have got a pan full of lilies open.

We have not had rain, except a mere sprinkling in the night of the 17th, since the 26th of May.

P. M. — To Conantum.

The warmest day yet. For the last two days I have worn nothing about my neck. This change or putting off of clothing is, methinks, as good an evidence of the increasing warmth of the weather as meteorological instruments. I thought it was hot weather perchance, when, a month ago, I slept with a window wide open and laid aside a comfortable, but by and by I found that I had got two windows open, and to-night two windows and the door are far from enough. *Hypericum perforatum* just out. This year the time when the locust was first heard was the time to put on summer clothes.

Early on the morning of the 18th the river felt lukewarm to my fingers when my paddle dipped deeper than usual. The galium with three small white petals (*G. trifidum*) has been out some time, and I find that erectish, broad-leaved, three-nerved, green-flowered one, perhaps *G. circæzans*, at Corner Spring. *Peltandra Virginica*, perhaps a week, for many of its flowers are effete and curved downward. The *Hypericum ellipticum*, by the riverside. The only violets I notice nowadays are a few white lanceolate ones in the meadows. The river has got down quite low, and the muddy shores are covered here and there with a sort of dark-brown paper, the dried filaments of

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confervæ which filled the water. Now is their fall. The bright little flowers of the *Ranunculus reptans* var. *filiformis* are seen peeping forth between its interstices. Calopogon out. I think it surpasses the pogonia, though the latter is sometimes high-colored and is of a handsome form; but it is inclined to be pale, is sometimes even white.

Now see many bright red amelanchier berries and some purple or dark-blue ones amid them. They [are] mostly injured by insects or apparently pecked and deformed by birds, but, from the few perfectly sound and ripe I have eaten to-day, I should pronounce them superior to either blueberries or huckleberries. Those of the *Botryapium* have a soft skin; of the shorter bush with a stiffer leaf, a tough skin. This is a little before blueberries. The panicled cornel is the only one of the cornels or viburnums that now is noticed in flower, generally speaking. The last of our cornels — the *C. sericea*, I think it must be — is just beginning.

The farmers have commenced haying. With this the summer culminates. The most extended crop of all is ready for the harvesting. Lint still comes off the leaves and shoots. It is so hot I have to lift my hat to let the air cool my head. I notice that that low, rather rigid fern, about two feet high, on the Great Hubbard Meadow, which a month ago was yellow, but now is green and in fruit, and with a harsh-feeling fruit atop, is decidedly inclined to grow in hollow circles from one foot to six or eight feet in diameter, — often, it is true, imperfect on one side, or, if large, filled up in the middle. How to account

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for it? Can it have anything to do with the hummocks deposited on the meadow? Many small stems near together in circles, *i. e.* not a single line. Is it the *Osmunda spectabilis?* Now I hear the spotted (?) flies about my head, — flies that settle and make themselves felt on the hand sometimes. The morning-glory still fresh at 3 P. M. A fine, large, delicate bell with waved border, some pure white, some reddened. The buds open perfectly in a vase. I find them open when I wake at 4 A. M. Is not this one of the eras or culminating places in the flower season? Not this till the sultry mornings come. Angelica, perhaps a day or more. Elder just opening. The four-leaved asclepias, probably some days. A rather handsome flower, with the peculiar fragrance of the milkweeds. Observed three or four sweet-briar bushes with white flowers of the usual size, by the wall under Conantum Cliff, — very slightly tinted with red or rose. In the paucity and form of prickles, at least, I make them answer to the *micrantha*, but not else. Is it intermediate? Opened at home in a vase in the shade. They are more distinctly rose-tinted. Leaves and all together in the water, they have a strong spirituous or rummy scent. There are no flowers nor flower-buds on the bass this year, though it was so full last year.

Where the other day I saw a pigeon woodpecker tapping and enlarging a hole in the dead limb of an apple tree, when as yet probably no egg was laid, to-day I see two well-grown young woodpeckers about as big as the old, looking out at the hole, showing their handsome spotted breasts and calling lustily

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for something to eat, or, it may be, suffering from the heat. Young birds in some situations must suffer greatly from heat these days, so closely packed in their nests and perhaps insufficiently shaded. It is a wonder they remain so long there patiently. I saw a yellowbird's nest in the willows on the causeway this afternoon and three young birds, nearly ready to fly, overflowing the nest, all holding up their open bills and keeping them steadily open for a minute or more, on noise of my approach. Still see cherry-birds in flocks.

Dogsbane and *Prinos verticillatus*. My white lilies in the pan are mostly withering the first day, the weather is so warm.

At sunset to Island.

The white anemone is withering with drought; else would probably have opened. Return while the sun is setting behind thunder-clouds, which now overshadow us. Between the heavy masses of clouds, mouse-colored, with dark-blue bases, the patches of clear sky are a glorious cobalt blue, as Sophia calls it. How happens it that the sky never appears so intensely, brightly, memorably blue as when seen between clouds and, it may be, as now in the south at sunset? This, too, is like the blue in snow. For the last two or three days it has taken me all the forenoon to wake up.

June 22. I do not remember a warmer night than the last. In my attic under the roof, with all windows and doors open, there was still not a puff of the usual

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coolness of the night. It seemed as if heat which the roof had absorbed during the day was being reflected down upon me. It was far more intolerable than by day. All windows being open, I heard the sounds made by pigs and horses in the neighborhood and of children who were partially suffocated with the heat. It seemed as if it would be something to tell of, the experience of that night, as of the Black Hole of Calcutta in a degree, if one survived it.

This forenoon a smart, straight-down shower from the eastward for ten or fifteen minutes, bordered round with thunder, — the first since May 26th. It did not touch the north part of the town. Some broad-leaved dock for a few days. Is it not the *obtusifolius*, front of Conantum house and by wall front of E. Wood's barn?

5.30 P. M. — To Walden and Fair Haven Hill.

Epilobium shows some pale or pink purple flowers on its spike. *Trifolium arvense.* It is quite cool now, after the shower in the forenoon. Now is the time for young birds. You cannot go near any thicket but the old will scold at you, and you see the kingbird and the blackbird and swallows pursuing crows and hawks, as for several weeks. I looked for the nest of the Maryland yellow-throat, but could not find it. Some animal has carried it off from the tuft of sedge, but I found one little egg which had dropped out. How many tragedies of this kind in the fields! Butter-and-eggs is a handsome yellow-spiked flower which would be better appreciated if it grew less profusely.

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The sun down, and I am crossing Fair Haven Hill, sky overcast, landscape dark and still. I see the smooth river in the north reflecting two shades of light, one from the water, another from the surface of the pads which broadly border it on both sides, and the very irregular waving or winding edge of the pads, especially perceptible in this light, makes a very agreeable border to distinguish, — the edge of the film which seeks to bridge over and inclose the river wholly. These pads are to the smooth water between like a calyx to its flower. The river at such an hour, seen half a mile away, perfectly smooth and lighter than the sky, reflecting the clouds, is a paradisaical scene. What are the rivers around Damascus to this river sleeping around Concord? Are not the Musketaquid and the Assabet, rivers of Concord, fairer than the rivers of the plain?

And then the rich warble of the blackbird may still occasionally even at this season be heard. As I come over the hill, I hear the wood thrush singing his evening lay. This is the only bird whose note affects me like music, affects the flow and tenor of my thought, my fancy and imagination. It lifts and exhilarates me. It is inspiring. It is a medicative draught to my soul. It is an elixir to my eyes and a fountain of youth to all my senses. It changes all hours to an eternal morning. It banishes all trivialness. It reinstates me in my dominion, makes me the lord of creation, is chief musician of my court. This minstrel sings in a time, a heroic age, with which no event in the village can be contemporary. How can they

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be contemporary when only the latter is *temporary* at all? How can the infinite and eternal be contemporary with the finite and temporal? So there is something in the music of the cow-bell, something sweeter and more nutritious, than in the milk which the farmers drink. This thrush's song is a *ranz des vaches* to me. I long for wildness, a nature which I cannot put my foot through, woods where the wood thrush forever sings, where the hours are early morning ones, and there is dew on the grass, and the day is forever unproved, where I might have a fertile unknown for a soil about me.[1] I would go after the cows, I would watch the flocks of Admetus there forever, only for my board and clothes. A New Hampshire everlasting and unfallen.

How wonderfully moral our whole life! There is never an instant's truce between virtue and vice. Goodness is the only investment that never fails. It is sung of in the music of the harp. This it is which thrills us. The harp is the travelling patterer for the Universe Insurance Company. One little goodness is all the assessment.

All that was ripest and fairest in the wilderness and the wild man is preserved and transmitted to us in the strain of the wood thrush. It is the mediator between barbarism and civilization. It is unrepentant as Greece.

I find my clothes covered with young caterpillars these days.

How wonderfully and admirably moral is our whole

[1] [Channing, p. 71.]

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life! Though the youth at last grows indifferent, the laws of the universe are not indifferent; they are still and forever on the side of the most tender and sensitive.

Listen in every zephyr for some reproof. It is the sweetest strain of the music. It provokes by its proud remoteness. Its satire trembles round the world. We cannot touch a string, awake a sound, but it reproves us. Many an irksome noise in our neighborhood, go a long distance off, is heard as music and a proud sweet satire on the meanness of our life. Not a music to dance to, but to live by.

Low blueberries now begin to show on high hills. You may get a handful or two. Yet perhaps a greater proportion of the shad-berries are ripe. Blueberries always surprise us.

These are the longest days in the year. The sun rises about 4.30 o'clock [and sets] about 7.30, leaving about eight hours of night. The strawberries may perhaps be considered a fruit of the spring, for they have depended chiefly on the freshness and moisture of spring, and on high lands are already dried up, — a soft fruit, a sort of manna which falls in June, — and in the meadows they lurk at the shady roots of the grass. Now the blueberry, a somewhat firmer fruit, is beginning. Nuts, the firmest, will be the last. Is not June the month in which all trees and shrubs grow, — do far the greater part of their growing? Will the shoots add much to their length in July? Berries are ripening now, when young birds are beginning to fly generally. *Lysimachia stricta*, apparently by to-

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morrow. I see froth nowadays on the panicled andromeda.

June 23. 5 A. M. — Up Union Turnpike.

The red morning-glory partly open at 5.45. Looking down on it, it is [a] regular pentagon, with sides but slightly incurved.

1.30 P. M. — To White Pond.

Sultry, dogdayish weather, with moist mists or low clouds hanging about, — the first of this kind we have had. I suspect it may be the result of a warm southwest wind met by a cooler wind from the sea. It is hard to tell if these low clouds most shade the earth or reflect its heat back upon it. At any rate a fresh, cool moisture and a suffocating heat are strangely mingled.

The *Specularia perfoliata* in flower at top of its leafy spikes for a few days, on Clamshell Hill, this side oaks. It is a rich-colored and handsome-shaped sort of lake-purple flower, — or color of a lilac violet. The lower and earlier flowers have no corollas. Perhaps one of the first-rate flowers, when many are open on the spike. Motherwort by roadside, probably yesterday. Pogonias are now very abundant in the meadow-grass, and now and then a calopogon is mixed with them. The last is broader and of more singular form, commonly with an unopened bud above on one side. Devil's-needles of various kinds abundant, now perhaps as much as ever. Some smaller ones a brilliant green with black wings. That must be the flowering fern

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that grows in rings. Lupines not quite gone, though most are gone to seed. A skunk-cabbage leaf makes the best vessel to drink out of at a spring, it is so large, already somewhat dishing, oftenest entire, and grows near at hand, and, though its odor when the stem is cut off is offensive, it does not flavor the water and is not perceived in drinking.

Along Nut Meadow Brook stand now angelicas in flower, as high as your head, their great greenish umbels above their naked purple stems. Senecio is going and gone to seed. At Apple-Hollow Pond, the heart-leaf grows in small solid circles from a centre, now white with its small delicate flowers somewhat like minute water-lilies. Here are thousands of devil's-needles of all sizes hovering over the surface of this shallow pond in the woods, in pursuit of one another and their prey, and from time to time alighting on the bushes around the shore, — I hear the rustling of their wings, — while swallows are darting about in a similar manner twenty feet higher. Perhaps they descend and pick up a needle now and then. This might be called Heart-leaf Pond, if there were not so many of them. Wild radish, some time, for its jointed seed-vessels are two inches long.

The small caterpillars which I bring home on my clothes nowadays come off of the young oaks, black and probably others. Their leaves are made into sieves and riddled by them. The painted tortoise eggs which I saw being deposited by White Pond the 14th are now shrivelled shells on the surface. I every year, as to-day, observe the sweet, refreshing fragrance

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of the swamp-pink, when threading the woods and swamps in hot weather. It is positively cool. Now in its prime. There is another small, shallow Heart-leaf Pond, west of White, which countless devil's-needles are hovering over with rustling wing, and swallows and pewees no doubt are on hand. That very handsome cove in White Pond at the south end, surrounded by woods. Looking down on it through the woods in middle of this sultry dogdayish afternoon, the bay being not so deep but that some reflection from the bottom affects it, the water is a misty bluish-green or glaucous color.[1] The rattlesnake and the wool grass have begun to bloom. The *e er ee er ter twee* is a pleasing wild note still pretty sure to be heard amid thick pine woods or on their edges, — rarely seen, though often heard.

After bathing I paddled to the middle in the leaky boat. The heart-leaf, which grows thinly here, is an interesting plant, sometimes floating at the end of a solitary, almost invisible, threadlike stem more than six feet long, and again many purplish stems intertwined into loose ropes, or like large skeins of silk, abruptly spreading at top, of course, into a perfectly flat shield, a foot or more [in] diameter, of small heart-shaped leaves, which rise and fall on their stems as the water is higher or lower. This perfectly horizontal disposition of the leaves in a single plane is an interesting and peculiar feature in water-plants of this kind. Leaves and flowers made to float on the dividing line between two elements. No water-bugs nor

[1] [*Walden*, p. 219; Riv. 309.]

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skaters, except a very few close to the shore, though the waves do not run much. Where the water is five or six feet deep, straight sticks on the bottom are made by the undulation on the surface to look like snakes in motion. The blue flags are past their prime here. Again I saw and heard the hummingbird visit the blue flags. He announces himself by a sudden loud humming. Now, at about 5 P. M., only at long intervals is a bullfrog's trump heard. Some are white-throated, others yellow.

In the warm noons nowadays, I see the spotted small yellow eyes of the four-leaved loosestrife looking at me from under the birches and pines springing up in sandy upland fields. *Asclepias Cornuti.* Ours, I think, must be the *Cornus sericea*, not *stolonifera.* The willow by Hubbard's Bridge must be either *Salix discolor* or *eriocephala;* I think the former.

The other day I saw what I took to be a scarecrow in a cultivated field, and noticing how unnaturally it was stuffed out here and there and how ungainly its arms and legs were, I thought to myself, "Well, it is thus they make these things; they do not stand much about it;" but looking round again after I had gone by, I saw my scarecrow walking off with a real live man in it.

I was just roused from my writing by the engine's whistle, and, looking out, saw shooting through the town two enormous pine sticks stripped of their bark, just from the Northwest and going to Portsmouth Navy-Yard, they say. Before I could call Sophia, they

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had got round the curve and only showed their ends on their way to the Deep Cut. Not a tree grows now in Concord to compare with them. They suggest what a country we have got to back us up that way. A hundred years ago or more perchance the wind wafted a little winged seed out of its cone to some favorable spot, and this is the result. In ten minutes they were through the township, and perhaps not half a dozen Concord eyes rested on them during their transit.

June 24. P. M. — Boated to Clamshell Hill.

My lilies in the pan have revived with the cooler weather since the rain. (It rained a little last night.) This is what they require that they may keep. Mayweed yesterday. The calopogon is a more bluish purple than the pogonia. The *Gnaphalium uliginosum* seems to be almost in blossom. Gratiola out in mud near river, — those bare, rather hard, muddy tracts on the edge of the meadow next the river, where mint grows and the mud has wide cracks, some nearly an inch wide, produced by the sun since the water went down. It is cooler and remarkably windy this afternoon, showing the under sides of the leaves and the pads, the white now red beneath and all green above. Wind northwest. Found what I take to be an Indian hoe at Hubbard Bathing-Place, sort of slate stone four or five eighths of an inch thick, semicircular, eight inches one way by four or more the other, chipped down on the edges.

At the Clamshell curve, great masses of a kind of fresh-water eel-grass have lodged against the potamo-

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geton in mid-channel, as against a shore, half a foot deep, and stretch across the river, long, green, narrow, ribbon-like. It is *apparently* the *Vallisneria spiralis*, eel-grass, tape-grass. It grows at the bottom in shallow places, slanting and waving down-stream. But what has collected it here all at once? Is it this strong wind operating on shallow places at curves? Or is it that some animal — muskrat or what-not — has loosened it? Or have men been at work up-stream somewhere? Does it always happen at this season? By the botany it does not blossom till August. There were piles of dried heart-leaf on shore at the bathing-place, a foot high and more. Were they torn up and driven ashore by the wind? I suspect it is the wind in both cases. As storms at sea tear up and cast ashore the seaweeds from the rocks. These are our seaweeds cast ashore in storms, but I see only the eel-grass and the heart-leaf thus served. Our most common in the river appears to be between the *Potamogeton natans* and *pulcher;* it answers to neither, but can be no other described. See it in fruit. I do not see the ranunculus flowers *very* abundant yet — will it not be this year? Then there is that long, somewhat cylindrical, fine-capillary and bladdery leaved plant which I had wrongly thought belonged to the *Ranunculus*. Is it not a utricularia? [1] All these, but especially the *R. Purshii*, have a strong fresh-water marsh smell, rather agreeable sometimes as a bottle of salts, like the salt marsh and seaweeds, invigorating to my imagination. In our great stream of distilled water going slowly

[1] It is *Utricularia vulgaris*; now in bloom.

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down to ocean to be salted. Sparganium, some time. Pontederia, just out. The lower translucent, waved leaves of the potamogeton are covered with a sort of very minute black caddis-case. The peat[?]-black petioles of these leaves are much like seaweed. There are the heart-leaf ponds, but I cannot say the potamogeton rivers on account of the tautology, and, beside, I do not like this last name, which signifies that it grows in the neighborhood of rivers, when it is not a neighbor but an indweller. You might as well describe the seaweeds as growing in the neighborhood of the sea.

The brown thrasher's nest (*vide* 21st) has been robbed, probably by some other bird. It rested on a branch of a swamp-pink and some grape-vines, effectually concealed and protected by grape-vines and green-briar in a matted bower above it. The foundation of pretty stout twigs, eight or nine inches in diameter, surmounted by coarse strips of grape bark, giving form to the nest, and then lined with some harsh, wiry root-fibres; within rather small and shallow, and the whole fabric of loose texture, not easy to remove.

Also got a blackbird's nest whose inhabitants had flown, hung by a kind of small dried rush (?) between two button-bushes which crossed above it; of meadow-grass and sedge, dried *Mikania scandens* vine, horse-tail, fish-lines, and a strip apparently of a lady's bathing-dress, lined with a somewhat finer grass; of a loose and ragged texture to look at. Green mikania running over it now.

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A yellowbird's nest (*vide* 21st) in a fork of a willow on Hubbard's Causeway, resting chiefly on the leading branch; of fine grass, lined with hair, bottom outside puffing out with a fine, light, flax-like fibre, perhaps the bark of some weed, by which also it is fastened to the twigs. It is surprising that so many birds find hair enough to line their nests with. If I wish for a horsehair for my compass sights I must go to the stable, but the hair-bird, with her sharp eyes, goes to the road.

The small white (perhaps *sometimes* violet or purplish) aster-like flower of Hubbard's meadow, for some days. If an aster, then the earliest one.

June 25. *Saturday.* P. M. — To Assabet Bathing-Place.

Great orange lily beyond stone bridge. Found in the Glade (?) Meadows an unusual quantity of amelanchier berries, — I think of the two common kinds, — one a taller bush, twice as high as my head, with thinner and lighter-colored leaves and larger, or at least somewhat softer, fruit, the other a shorter bush, with more rigid and darker leaves and dark-blue berries, with often a sort of woolliness on them. Both these are now in their prime. These are the first berries after strawberries, or the first, and I think the sweetest, *bush* berries. Somewhat like high blueberries, but not so hard. Much eaten by insects, worms, etc. As big as the largest blueberries or peas. These are the "service-berries" which the Indians of the north and the Canadians use. *La poire* of the latter (*vide*

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Indian books, No. 6, p. 13). They by a little precede the early blueberry (though Holbrook brought two quarts of the last day before yesterday), being now in their prime, while blueberries are but just *beginning*. I never saw nearly so many before. It is a very agreeable surprise. I hear the cherry-birds and others about me, no doubt attracted by this fruit. It is owing to some peculiarity in the season that they bear fruit. I have picked a quart of them for a pudding. I felt all the while I was picking them, in the low, light, wavy shrubby wood they make, as if I were in a foreign country. Several old farmers say, "Well, though I have lived seventy years, I never saw nor heard of them." I think them a delicious berry, and no doubt they require only to be more abundant every year to be appreciated.

I think it must be the purple finch, — with the crimson head and shoulders, — which I see and hear singing so sweetly and variedly in the gardens, — one or two to-day. It sits on a bean-pole or fence-pick[et]. It has a little of the martin warble and of the canary-bird.

June 26. Very cool day.

Had for dinner a pudding made of service-berries. It was very much like a rather dry cherry pudding without the stones.

A slight hail-storm in the afternoon.

Euphorbia maculata.

Our warmest night thus far this year was June 21st. It began to be cooler the 24th.

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5.30 P. M. — To Cliffs.

Carrot by railroad. Mine apparently the *Erigeron strigosus*, yet sometimes tinged with purple. The tephrosia is an agreeable mixture of white, straw-color, and rose pink; unpretending. What is the result of that one leaf (or more), much and irregularly, or variously, divided and cut, with milk in it, in woods, either a lactuca or prenanthes, probably, one foot or more high?

Such is oftenest the young man's introduction to the forest and wild. He goes thither at first as a hunter and fisher, until at last the naturalist or poet distinguishes that which attracted him and leaves the gun and fishing-rod behind. The mass of men are still and always young in this respect. I have been surprised to observe that the only obvious employment which ever to my knowledge detained at Walden Pond for a whole half-day, unless it was in the way of business, any of my "fellow-citizens," whether fathers or children of the town, with just one exception, was fishing. They might go there a thousand times, perchance, before the sediment of fishing would sink to the bottom and leave their purpose pure, — before they began to angle for the pond itself. Thus, even in civilized society, the embryo man (speaking intellectually) passes through the hunter stage of development. They did not think they were lucky or well paid for their time unless they got a long string of fish, though they had the opportunity of seeing the pond all the while. They measured their success by the length of a string of fish. The Governor faintly remembers the pond, for

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he went a-fishing there when he was a boy, but now he is too old and dignified to go a-fishing, and so he knows it no longer. If the Legislature regards it, it is chiefly to regulate the number of hooks to be used in fishing there; but they know nothing about the hook of hooks.[1]

At Cliffs. — The air is warmer, but wonderfully clear after the hail-storm. I do not remember when I have seen it more clear. The mountains and horizon outlines on all sides are distinct and near. Nobscot has lost all its blue, is only a more distant hill pasture, and the northwest mountains are too terrestrial a blue and firmly defined to be mistaken for clouds. Billerica is as near as Bedford commonly. I see new spires far in the south, and on every side the horizon is extended many miles. It expands me to look so much farther over the rolling surface of the earth. Where I had seen or fancied only a hazy forest outline, I see successive swelling hills and remote towns. So often to the luxurious and hazy summer in our minds, when, like Fletcher's "Martyrs in Heaven," we,

> "estranged from all misery
> As far as Heaven and Earth discoasted lie,
> Swelter in quiet waves of immortality,"

some great chagrin succeeds, some chilling cloud comes over. But when it is gone, we are surprised to find that it has cleared the air, summer returns without its haze, we see infinitely further into the horizon on every side, and the boundaries of the world are enlarged.

[1] [*Walden*, pp. 235, 236; Riv. 331–333.]

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A beautiful sunset about 7.30; just clouds enough in the west (we are on Fair Haven Hill); they arrange themselves about the western gate. And now the sun sinks out of sight just on the north side of Watatic, and the mountains, north and south, are at once a dark indigo blue, for they had been darkening for an hour or more. Two small clouds are left on the horizon between Watatic and Monadnock, their sierra edges all on fire. Three minutes after the sun is gone, there is a bright and memorable afterglow in his path, and a brighter and more glorious light falls on the clouds above the portal. His car, borne further round, brings us in the angle of excidence. Those little sierra clouds look like two castles on fire, and I see the fire through ruined windows. The low west horizon glows now, five or six minutes after sunset, with a delicate salmon-color tinged with rose, deepest where the sun disappeared, and fading off upward; and north and south are dark-blue cloud islands in it. When I invert my head these delicate salmon-colored clouds look like a celestial Sahara sloping gently upward, an inclined plane upward, to be travelled by caravans bound heavenward, with blue oases in it.

June 27. 4.30 A. M. — To Island by river.

The cuckoo's nest is robbed, or perhaps she broke her egg because I found it. Thus three out of half a dozen nests which I have revisited have been broken up. It is a very shallow nest, six or seven inches in diameter by two and a half or three deep, on a low bending willow, hardly half an inch deep within; con-

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cealed by overlying leaves of a swamp white oak on the edge of the river meadow, two to three feet from ground, made of slender twigs which are prettily ornamented with much ramalina lichen, lined with hickory catkins and pitch pine needles. I have described the rest before.

Saw a little pickerel with a minnow in his mouth. It was a beautiful little silver-colored minnow, two inches long, with a broad stripe down the middle. The pickerel held [it] crosswise near the tail, as he had seized it, and as I looked down on him, he worked the minnow along in his mouth toward the head, and then swallowed it head foremost. Was this instinct? Fishermen should consider this in giving form to their bait. The pickerel does not swallow the bait at once, but first seizes it, then probably decides how it can best be swallowed, and no doubt he lets go again in disgust some baits of which he can make neither head nor tail.

The radical leaves (four?) of the floating-heart are triangularly or wedge ovate, on petioles one to two inches long. The two large potamogetons now common on river (the smaller apparently not long in flower), with ovate or elliptical floating leaves sometimes salmon-color, belong to one or two of the first three of Gray. The smaller has its immersed leaves long, narrowly linear, and semicylindrical; those of the largest are pellucid, lanceolate, and waved. That sort of ostrich feather on the bottom appears to be the *Potamogeton Robbinsii*. What is that foul, submerged, densely whorled and capillary-leaved and forked utricularia-

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like but bladderless plant? Then there is a pinnate and cut-leafed plant on the bottom. Is it radical leaves of a proserpinaca? or a milfoil? I find a little bug between the calyx and petals of white lilies which have not opened. It has eaten holes in them.

The dogsbane is one of the more interesting little flowers.

June 28. Nettle out a few days. Pepper-grass, a week or more. Catnep, also, a few days. We have warmer weather now again.

June 29. Jersey tea, just beginning. *Asclepias obtusifolia*, a day or two. *Sericocarpus conyzoides*.

June 30. Succory on the bank under my window, probably from flowers I have thrown out within a year or two. A rainbow in the west this morning. Hot weather.

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V

JULY, 1853

(ÆT. 35–36)

July 1. I am surveying the Bedford road these days, and have no time for my Journal. Saw one of those great pea-green emperor moths, like a bird, fluttering over the top of the woods this forenoon, 10 A. M., near Beck Stow's. Gathered the early red blackberry in the swamp or meadow this side of Pedrick's, where I ran a pole down nine feet. It is quite distinct from the evergreen one and is without prickles. Fruit red, middle-sized, with a few, perhaps ten or twelve, large globules. May be the *Rubus triflorus*, but not growing on hills.

July 2. Cooler to-day. *Polygonum Persicaria.* The *Ranunculus Purshii* is very rarely seen now. I hear a harsh *keow* from a bittern flying over the river. The peetweets are quite noisy about the rocks in Merrick's pasture when I approach; have eggs or young there, which they are anxious about. The tall anemone in blossom, and no doubt elsewhere much earlier, — a week or ten days before this, — but the drought has checked it here. Saw on a maple leaf floating on the Assabet a kind of large aphides, thickly covering it. It was thickly coated with a mass of down,

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for their tails were like swan's-down, and, as they were constantly in motion, just stirring at least, it was as if there was a wind on it. Thimble-berries probably a day or two.

July 3. Elder is now in its prime. Buttercups are almost gone. Clover is blackened. The umbelled pyrola, apparently yesterday, as well as the *P. rotundifolia* and the *P. elliptica*, or shin-leaf. The *P. secunda*, or one-sided pyrola, is already out of bloom.

The oven-bird's nest in Laurel Glen is near the edge of an open pine wood, under a fallen pine twig and a heap of dry oak leaves. Within these, on the ground, is the nest, with a dome-like top and an arched entrance of the whole height and width on one side. Lined within with dry pine-needles.

Mountain laurel lingers in the woods still. The chestnut behind my old house site is fully out, and apparently has been partly so for several days. There are no flowers on bass trees commonly this year. Smooth sumach just opening and already resounding with bees. The water-target appears to be in its prime, its flowers rising above the water. Remarkable for the thick jelly on its leaves and stem. A smaller potamogeton is in flower there, — the small globose white flower. Why is it so often already torn up by the roots? Poke a day or two in favorable places. Dogsbane and Jersey tea are among the prevailing flowers now. The *Utricularia vulgaris* now yellows low muddy water, as near the Lincoln bound by Walden. The *Vaccinium vacillans* a day or two ripe. Black huckle-

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berries. Tansy on the causeway. The Canada thistle. The pinweeds have a reddish look, as if in flower.

July 4. The cotton-grass at Beck Stow's. Is it different from the early one? High blueberries begin. The oval-leaved drosera in bloom. *Campanula aparinoides.* I see now a later (?) rose in lower, wetter ground. *Polygala sanguinea.* The weeds are now so thick in the river — potamogetons, heart-leaf, *Ranunculus Purshii*, eel-grass, etc., etc. — as almost to conceal the stream and seriously to obstruct the passage of my boat. *Polygonum sagittatum.* The cymbidium now perhaps in its prime. I am attracted by the peculiar glaucous leaves of the rhodora. Noli-me-tangere. The beauty of some butterflies, — dark steel-blue with a light-blue edge. Circæa, some time, the small one, at Corner Spring. Parsnips. The bass appears now — or a few trees — to have bloomed here and there prematurely. The gall on the leaves of the slippery elm is like fruit. The greater plantain, a few days. The fine feathery tail of the *Equisetum sylvaticum* (?) nowadays in damp woods, near Corner Spring. The *Potamogeton hybridus* (?) in fruit and flower; though the spike is cylindrical like *P. heterophyllus*, yet the petioles are shorter than the floating leaves. What is the apparently wholly immersed potamogeton, upright with linear-lanceolate leaves? (No flower nor fruit now.) Also what is that small upright, round, tapering plant, three inches high, at bottom of river, with apparently bristle-formed leaves arranged alternately crosswise, visibly cellular? At

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Lee's Cliff, under the slippery elm, *Parietaria Pennsylvanica*, American pellitory, in flower, and near by *Anychia dichotoma*, forked chickweed (Queria [*sic*]) also in flower.

July 5. Raspberries, some days.

Such a habit have cows in a pasture of moving forward while feeding that, in surveying on the Great Fields to-day, I was interrupted by a herd of a dozen cows, which successively passed before my line of vision, feeding forward, and I had to watch my opportunity to look between them. Sometimes, however, they were of use, when they passed behind a birch stake and made a favorable background against which to see it.

July 6. I can sound the swamps and meadows on the line of the new road to Bedford with a pole, as if they were water. It may be hard to break through the crust, but then it costs a very slight effort to force it down, sometimes nine or ten feet, where the surface is dry. Cut a straight sapling, an inch or more in [diameter]; sharpen and peel it that it may go down with the least obstruction. The larch grows in both Moore's and Pedrick's swamps. Do not the trees that grow there indicate the depth of the swamp? I drink at the black and sluggish run which rises in Pedrick's Swamp and at the clearer and cooler one at Moore's Swamp, and, as I lie on my stomach, I am surprised at the quantity of decayed wood continually borne past. It is this process which, carried on for ages,

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formed this accumulation of soil. The outlets of a valley being obstructed, the decayed wood is no longer carried off but deposited near where it grew.

July 7. Very dry weather. Every traveller, horse, and cow raises a cloud of dust. It streams off from their feet, white and definite in its outline, like the steam from a locomotive. Those who walk behind a flock of sheep must suffer martyrdom. Now is that annual drought which is always spoken of as something unprecedented and out of the common course.

Is that a utricularia which fills the water at the north end of Beck Stow's? Sarsaparilla berries are ripe.

Paddled up the river this evening. It is remarkable that, in pushing a boat up a river with a sandy bottom, the sound of the oar on the sand should be communicated so distinctly through the oar to the air. It is perhaps as distinct as if no water intervened. We have cool nights now after warm days, — cooler than in June. You cannot safely wear your thin coat into evening outdoors. The *Asclepias incarnata*, or water asclepias now.

July 8. Large œnothera. Toads are still heard occasionally at evening. To-day I heard a hylodes peep (perhaps a young one), which have so long been silent.

July 10. *Galium asprellum*, probably about the 5th or 6th. The side-flowering scutellaria now. Hedge-nettle, a day or two. *Lysimachia lanceolata* var. *hybrida*,

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some days. Yellow lily now common (since the 4th). The large seed-vessels of the blue flag conspicuous. The rainbow rush has been in bloom for some time. *Epilobium coloratum.* A rough eupatorium budded at Hubbard's burning. *Ludwigia palustris*, probably for ten days. *Rubus Canadensis* now. The red capsules of the *Hypericum ellipticum* begin to show in low lands. The cardinal-flower shows red. At Cardinal Shore a large *Polygonum amphibium*, seven feet long, left by the water, creeping over the shore and rooting in it at the joints; not yet in flower.

The bream poised over its sandy nest on waving fin — how aboriginal! So it has poised here and watched its ova before this New World was known to the Old. Still I see the little cavities of their nests along the shore.

Lycopus sinuatus, water horehound.

July 11. Rain last night.

The aromatic trichostema now springing up. *Gnaphalium uliginosum* now. Hydrocotyle, some days. Agrimony, also, some days. Button-bush. *Centaurea nigra*, some time, Union Turnpike, against E. Wood's, low ground, and *Ludwigia alternifolia*, apparently just begun, at entrance to *poke-logan* near Assabet Bathing-Place. The small crypta already in fruit. I find in the river, especially near the Assabet Bathing-Place, a ranunculus some of whose leaves are capillary, others merely wedge-cut or divided. Is it not the *R. aquatilis*?[1] But I see no flowers.

[1] I think it is the *R. Purshii.*

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July 12. White vervain. Checkerberry, maybe some days. Spikenard, not quite yet. The green-flowered lanceolate-leafed orchis at Azalea Brook will soon flower. Either *Gymnadenia tridentata* or *Platanthera flava*. *Circæa alpina* (?) there, but nearly eighteen inches high. *Lycopus Virginicus*, not open in shade; probably in a day or two. Wood horse-tail very large and handsome there.

July 13. Purslane, probably to-day. *Chenopodium album*. Pontederias in prime. Purple bladderwort (*Utricularia purpurea*), not long, near Hollowell place, the buds the deepest-colored, the stems rather loosely leaved or branched, with whorls of five or six leaves. On the hard, muddy shore opposite Dennis's, in the meadow, *Hypericum Sarothra* in dense fields, also *Canadense*, both a day or two, also ilysanthes, sium with leaves a third of an inch wide, and the cardinal flower, probably the 11th. *Hypericum mutilum* in the meadow, maybe a day or two. Whorled bladderwort, for some time, even gone to seed; this, the purple, and the common now abundant amid the pads and rising above them. *Potamogeton compressus* (?) immersed, with linear leaves. I see no flower.

I believe it is the radical leaves of the heart-leaf, — large, waved, transparent, — which in many places cover the bottom of the river where five or six feet deep, as with green paving-stones. Did not somebody mistake these for the radical leaves of the kalmiana lily?

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July 14. Heavy fog.

I see a rose, now in its prime, by the river, in the water amid the willows and button-bushes, while others, lower on shore, are nearly out of bloom. Is it not the *R. Carolina?* Saw something blue, or glaucous, in Beck Stow's Swamp to-day; approached and discovered the *Andromeda Polifolia*, in the midst of the swamp at the north end, not long since out of bloom. This is another instance of a common experience. When I am shown from abroad, or hear of, or in any [way] become interested in, some plant or other thing, I am pretty sure to find it soon. Within a week R. W. E. showed me a slip of this in a botany, as a great rarity which George Bradford brought from Watertown. I had long been interested in it by Linnæus's account. I now find it in abundance. It is a neat and tender-looking plant, with the pearly new shoots now half a dozen inches long and the singular narrow revolute leaves. I suspect the flower does not add much to it.

There is an abundance of the buck-bean there also. Holly berries are beginning to be ripe. The *Polygonum Hydropiper*, by to-morrow. *Spergula arvensis* gone to seed and in flower. A very tall ragged orchis by the Heywood Brook, two feet high, almost like a white fringed one. Lower ones I have seen some time.

The clematis there (near the water-plantain) will open in a day or two. Mallows gone to seed and in bloom. *Erigeron Canadensis*, butter-weed.

July 15. Common form of arrowhead. The *Rumex obtusifolius* shows its single grain now. Near Loring's

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ram that coarse mustard-like branched plant, one or two feet high, with racemes of small yellow flowers, — perhaps Gray's *Nasturtium palustre* or Bigelow's *Sisymbrium amphibium*, — in seed and in blossom.

July 16. *Rhus copallina* behind Bent's, budded, not quite open. *Solidago stricta* (?) at Cato's cellar, a day or two. The pasture thistle, more than a week. Is it the *Potamogeton heterophyllus* in Walden, now in flower and for some time? Door-grass.

July 17. The common amaranth. Young toads not half an inch long at Walden shore. The smooth sumach resounds with the hum of bees, wasps, etc., at Water-target Pond. I see two great devil's-needles, three inches long, with red abdomens and bodies as big as hummingbirds, sailing round this pond, round and round, and ever and anon darting aside suddenly, probably to seize some prey. Here and there the water-targets look red, perhaps their under sides. A duck at Goose Pond. Rank weeds begin to block up low wood-paths, — goldenrods, asters, etc. The pearly everlasting. *Lobelia inflata*. The *Solidago nemoralis* (?) in a day or two, — gray goldenrod. I think we have no *Hieracium Gronovii*, though one not veined always and sometimes with two or more leaves on stem. No grass balls to be seen.

July 18. *Sonchus oleraceus* well in bloom.

8.30 A. M. — To Sudbury meadows with W. E. C. by boat.

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Hardhack in bloom perhaps a day or two. The button-bush beginning to open generally. The late, or river, rose spots the copses over the water, — a great ornament to the river's brink now. Three utricularias and perhaps the horned also common now. Rhexia, a day or two. The pads are now much eaten. Thoroughwort. Meadow haying has commenced. There is no pause between the English and meadow haying. There are thousands of yellow butterflies on the pontederia flowers, and of various colors on the button-bush. In the Sudbury meadows are dense fields of pipes three feet high bordering the river. The common large rush, flowering at top, makes black-looking squads there. The fields of pontederia are in some places four or five rods wide and almost endless, but, crossing from side to side on shore, are the open white umbels of the hemlock, and now thesium begins to show. These meadows, with their meandering stream, through whose weeds it is hard to push a boat, are very wild. The stake-driver and the *virescens* rise and go off with sluggish flight from time to time. What is that continual dry *chucking* sound heard about the pads? The darting of a fish, or of an insect? The heart-leaves are eaten and turned dark, but the less decayed part in the centres, still green, is of the form and appearance of the less cut leaves of the *Ranunculus Purshii*, — either leading to or following after that. As they decay, such a leaf as the less divided ones of the *R. Purshii* is left, or promises to be left, — is suggested. That smaller narrow-leaved polygonum which forms the first and lower rank in the river is in many

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places in blossom, rose-colored, whitish. What is that rather tall, coarse kind of aster, with a few broad rays, in the copse behind Bittern Cliff?[1] Is it *Diplopappus cornifolius?* Now are the days to go a-berrying.

July 19. Clematis has been open a day or two. The alisma will open to-morrow or next day. This morning a fog and cool. What is that small conyza-like aster, with flaccid linear leaves, in woods near Boiling Spring? Some woodbine, cultivated, apparently long since flowered. The same of some on Lee's Cliff, where it is early.

July 20. To Nawshawtuct at moonrise with Sophia, by boat.

Moon apparently fulled yesterday. A low mist incrusts the meadow, — not so perceptible when we are on the water. Now we row through a thin low mist about as high as one's head, now we come to a place where there is no mist on the river or meadow, apparently where a slight wind stirs. The gentle susurrus from the leaves of the trees on shore is very enlivening, as if Nature were freshening, awakening to some enterprise. There is but little wind, but its sound, incessantly stirring the leaves at a little distance along the shore, heard not seen, is very inspiriting. It is like an everlasting dawn or awakening of nature to some great purpose. As we go up the hill we smell the sweet-

[1] July 30th, a somewhat similar white aster with many middle-sized heads and a roughish stem in Dugan's [?] meadow.

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briar. The trees are now heavy, dark masses without tracery, not as in spring or early in June; but I forgot to say that the moon was at first eclipsed by a vast black bank of cloud in the east horizon, which seemed to rise faster than it, and threatened to obscure it all the night. But suddenly she rose above it, and when, a few moments after, we thought to look again for the threatening cloud-bank, it had vanished, or a mere filmy outline could be faintly traced beneath her. It was the eclipse of her light behind it that made this evil look so huge and threatening, but now she had triumphed over it and eclipsed it with her light. It had vanished, like an ugly dream. So is it ever with evils triumphed over, which we have put behind us. What was at first a huge dark cloud in the east which threatened to eclipse the moon the livelong night is now suddenly become a filmy vapor, not easy to be detected in the sky, lit by her rays. She comes on thus, magnifying her dangers by her light, at first displaying, revealing them in all their hugeness and blackness, exaggerating, then casting them behind her into the light concealed. She goes on her way triumphing through the clear sky like a moon which was threatened by dark clouds at her rising but rose above them.[1] That black, impenetrable bank which threatened to be the ruin of all our hopes is now a filmy dash of vapor with a faint-purplish tinge, far in the orient sky.

From the hilltop we see a few distant lights in farmhouses down below, hard to tell where they are,

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 329; Riv. 405.]

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yet better revealing *where* [*sic*] they are than the sun does. But cottage lights are not conspicuous now as in the autumn. As we looked, a bird flew across the disk of the moon. Saw two skunks carrying their tails about some rocks. Singular that, of all the animated creation, chiefly these skunks should be abroad in this moonlight. This is the midsummer night's moon. We have come round the east side of the hill to see the moon from amid the trees. I like best to see its light falling far in amid the trees and along the ground before me, while itself is hidden behind them or one side. It is cool, methinks with a peculiar coolness, as it were from the luxuriance of the foliage, as never in June. At any rate we have had no such sultry nights this month as in June. There is a greater contrast between night and day now, reminding me that even in Hindostan they freeze ice in shallow vessels at night in summer (?). There is a mist very generally dispersed, which gives a certain mellowness to the light, a wavingness apparently, a creaminess. Yet the light of the moon is a cold, almost frosty light, white on the ground.

There [are] a few fireflies about. Green, their light looks sometimes, and crickets are heard. You are pretty sure also to hear some human music, vocal or instrumental, far or near. The masses of the trees and bushes would be called black, if our knowledge that they are leaves did not make us call them dark-green. Here is the *Pycnanthemum lanceolatum* near the boat's place, which I scent in the dark. It has been out some days, for some flowers are quite withered. I hear

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from the copses or bushes along the shore, returning, a faint everlasting fine song from some small cricket, or rather locust, which it required the stillness of night to reveal. A bat hovers about us. How oily smooth the water in this moonlight! And the apparent depth where stars are reflected frightens Sophia. These Yankee houses and gardens seen rising beyond this oily moon-lit water, on whose surface the circling insects are like sparks of fire, are like Italian dwellings on the shores of Italian lakes. When we have left the boat and the river, we are surprised, looking back from the bank, to see that the water is wholly concealed under a white mist, though it was scarcely perceptible when we were in its midst. The few bull-frogs are the chief music. I do not know but walnuts are peculiarly handsome by moonlight, — seeing the moon rising through them, and the form of their leaves. I felt some nuts. They have already their size and that bracing, aromatic scent.

July 21. 2 P. M. — Went, in pursuit of boys who had stolen my boat-seat, to Fair Haven.

Plenty of berries there now, — large huckleberries, blueberries, and blackberries. My downy-leafed plant of Annursnack and under the Cliffs, now in bloom, and some days, is the *Pycnanthemum incanum*, — common mountain mint or wild basil. It is two or three feet high and very velvety-downy, while calamint is rigid. What is that small creeping plant covering the ground in the Cliff brook like a veronica, — leaf shaped like that of the small veronica on the Cliffs,

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leaves opposite but far apart, rooting at base? No traces of a flower. The small purple orchis, its spikes half opened. The *Rhus copallina* is most abundant on the low knoll beneath the Cliffs, not yet blossomed. *Euphorbia hypericifolia* (?) at Bittern Cliff, how long? Horse-mint, a day or two, the earliest. *Desmodium acuminatum*, some days; it is a delicate spike of flowers on a long peduncle. The berries of the alternate cornel are beginning to ripen. I am entering Fair Haven Pond. It is now perfectly still and smooth, like dark glass. Yet the westering sun is very warm. He who passes over a lake at noon, when the waves run, little imagines its serene and placid beauty at evening, as little as he anticipates his own serenity. There is no more beautiful part of the river than the entrance to this pond. The *Asclepias incarnata* is well named water silkweed, for it grows here amid the button-bushes and willows in the wettest places along the river. Nature is beautiful only as a place where a life is to be lived. It is not beautiful to him who has not resolved on a beautiful life. The horned utricularia appears to be in its prime, though there was none here June 16th. It yellows the shore, together with the hyssop and filiform ranunculus, not to mention the lanceolate loosestrife. The spear thistle.

The tall anemone grows by the red oak near the elms opposite the pond on Conantum and is still in flower. I am surprised by the abundance of large shining blackberries on the hillsides; every bush does its best. The river is so low and weedy that at Hubbard's bend, though there is most current at bends,

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three rails have been lodged in different places in mid-channel and have not advanced for a week or more. It rapidly grows cool toward sunset. The sun is now warm on my back, and when I turn round I have to shade my face with my hands; but some time before it sets the dews begin to fall, and a damp, cool air is felt over the water, and I want a thick coat. Ten minutes before sunset I saw large clear dewdrops at the tips, or half an inch below the tips, of the pontederia leaves.

July 22. P. M. — To Annursnack.

The *Chenopodium hybridum* (?); at least its leaves are dark-green, rhomboidal, and *heart*-shaped. The orchis and spikenard at Azalea Brook are not yet open. The early roses are now about done, — the sweet-briar quite, I think. I see sometimes houstonias still. The elodea out. Boehmeria not yet. On one account, at least, I enjoy walking in the fields less at this season than at any other; there are so many men in the fields haying now. Observed, on the wild basil on Annursnack, small reddish butterflies which looked like a part of the plant. It has a singularly soft, velvety leaf. Smooth sumach berries crimson there.

There is a kind of low blackberry which does not bear large fruit but very dense clusters, by wall-sides, shaded by the vine or other plants often, of clammy and strong-tasted berries.

Yellow butterflies in the road. I find the *Campanula Americana* of the West naturalized in our garden. Also a silene (?) without *visibly* viscid stem and with

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swollen joints; apparently the snapdragon catchfly otherwise. Leaves opposite, sessile, lanceolate.

July 23. P. M. — To P. Hutchinson's.

I cannot find a single crotalaria pod there this year. Stone-crop is abundant and has now for some time been out at R. Brown's watering-place; also the water-plantain, which is abundant there. About the water further north the elodea is very common, and there, too, the rhexia is seen afar on the islets, — its brilliant red like a rose. It is fitly called meadow-beauty. Is it not the handsomest and most striking and brilliant flower since roses and lilies began? Blue vervain out some days.

Bathing yesterday in the Assabet, I saw that many breams, apparently an old one with her young of various sizes, followed my steps and found their food in the water which I had muddied. The old one pulled lustily at a *Potamogeton hybridus*, drawing it off one side horizontally with her mouth full, and then swallowed what she tore off. The young pouts were two and a half inches long in Flint's Pond the 17th.

July 24. *Sunday*. 4.30 A. M. — By boat to Island.

Robins, larks, peawais, etc., as in the spring, at this hour. The mikania to-morrow or next day.[1] The zizania, some days. The low, front-rank polygonums are still imbrowned in many places; as I think, have not recovered from the effect of late frosts.

Mr. Pratt asked me to what animal a spine and

[1] July 29.

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broken skull found in the wall of James Adams's shop belonged, — within the partition. I found by its having but two kinds of teeth, and they incisive and molar, that it belonged to the order *Rodentia*, which, with us, consists of the Beaver, Hare, Rat (including squirrels), and Porcupine families. From its having "incisors $\frac{2}{2}$, molars $\frac{3-3}{3-3}$" and "molars with a flat crown and zigzag plates of enamel," I knew it to be a muskrat, which probably got into the building at a time of high water. The molars appeared like one long tooth, their flat, smooth tops zigzagged with the edges of hard plates of enamel in this wise somewhat; but after looking long and sharply with a microscope, though on the side I could not distinguish the separate teeth, I made out, by tracing about the edges of the enamel which intertwined and broke joints curiously for strength, three separate inclosures, and, with full faith in this and in science, I told Pratt it was a muskrat, and gave him my proofs; but he could not distinguish the three molars even with a glass, or was still plainly uncertain, for he had thought them one tooth, when, taking his pincers, he pulled one out and was convinced, much to his and to my satisfaction and our confidence in science! How very hard must be the teeth of this animal whose food is clams! What keeps his incisors so sharp? Look at this strong head, with its upper jaw and incisor curved somewhat like a turtle's beak. What an apparatus for cutting, holding, crushing! What a trap to be caught in! It is amusing to think what grists have

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come to this mill, though now the upper and nether stones fall loosely apart, and the brain-chamber above, where the miller lodged, is now empty (passing under the portcullis of the incisors), and the windows are gone.

With or without reason, I find myself associating with the idea of summer a certain cellar-like coolness, resulting from the depth of shadows and the luxuriance of foliage. I think that after this date the crops never suffer so severely from drought as in June, because of their foliage shading the ground and producing dews. We had fog this morning, and no doubt often the last three weeks, which my surveying has prevented my getting up to see.

It is the palmer-worm which has attacked the apple trees this year.

Surveying one very hot day, a week or two ago, and having occasion to strip a sapling of its bark, I was surprised to observe how cool the freshly exposed and sappy wood was, as if it extracted coolness from the cool cellars of the earth.

Sophia's *Viola pedata*, taken up in the spring, blossomed again a day or two ago. I perceive the peculiar scent of corn-fields.

Yesterday a dew-like, gentle summer rain. You scarcely know if you are getting wet.

At least two kinds of grass as tall as the zizania have preceded it along the river. One has long since gone to seed, and looks flavid or yellowish now. The other is still in blossom, its chaff (?) being remarkably and regularly on one side of the glume (?). For a week or more I have perceived that the evenings were con-

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siderably longer and of some account to sit down and write in. Ate an early-harvest apple of my own raising yesterday; not quite ripe. The scent of some very early ones which I have passed in my walks, imparting some ripeness to the year, has excited me somewhat. It affects me like a performance, a poem, a thing done; and all the year is not a mere promise of Nature's.

How far behind the spring seems now, — farther off, perhaps, than ever, for this heat and dryness is most opposed to spring. Where most I sought for flowers in April and May I do not think to go now; it is either drought and barrenness or fall there now. The reign of moisture is long since over. For a long time the year feels the influence of the snows of winter and the long rains of spring, but now how changed! It is like another and a fabulous age to look back on, when earth's veins were full of moisture, and violets burst out on every hillside. Spring is the reign of water; summer, of heat and dryness; winter, of cold. Whole families of plants that lately flourished have disappeared. Now the phenomena are tropical. Let our summer last long enough, and our land would wear the aspect of the tropics. The luxuriant foliage and growth of all kinds shades the earth and is converting every copse into a jungle. Vegetation is rampant. There is not such rapid growth, it is true, but it slumbers like a serpent that has swallowed its prey. Summer is one long drought. Rain is the exception. All the signs of it fail, for it is dry weather. Though it may seem so, the current year is not peculiar in this

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respect. It is a slight labor to keep count of all the showers, the rainy days, of a summer. You may keep it on your thumb nail.

P. M. — To Corner Spring and Fair Haven Hill.

Mimulus ringens at Heywood Brook, probably several days. The fruit of the skunk-cabbage is turned black. At Hubbard's Bathing-Place I tread on clams all across the river in mid-channel, flattening them down, for they are on their edges. The small linear-leaved hypericum (*H. Canadense*) shows red capsules. The black choke-berry, probably some days. The dark indigo-blue (Sophia says), waxy, and like blue china blue berries of the clintonia are already well ripe. For some time, then, though a few are yet green. They are numerous near the edge of Hubbard's lower meadow. They are in clusters of half a dozen on brittle stems eight or ten inches high, oblong or squarish round, the size of large peas with a dimple atop. Seen thus, above the handsome, regular green leaves which are still perfect in form and color and which, here growing close together, checker the ground, and also in the dense shade of the copse, there is something peculiarly celestial about them. This is the plant's true flower, for which it has preserved its leaves fresh and unstained so long. *Eupatorium pubescens* at Hubbard's burnt meadow. There is much near his grove. Also *Epilobium molle* there (put it with the *coloratum*), and *coloratum* and the common still in blossom. There is erechthites there, budded. Also *Lysimachia ciliata* and, by the causeway near, the ovate-leaved, quite dis-

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tinct from the lanceolate, — I think not so early as the last. At the Corner Spring the berries of the trillium are already pink. The medeola is still in flower, though with large green berries. The swamp-pink still blooms and the morning-glory is quite fresh; it is a pure white, like a lady's morning gown.

The aspect of vegetation about the spring reminds me of fall. The angelica, skunk-cabbage, trillium, arum, and the lodged and flattened grass are all phenomena of the fall.

A spikenard just beyond the spring has already pretty large green berries, though a few flowers. Say July 10th. It is a great plant, six feet high, seven long, with the largest pinnate leaves of this kind I think of. More than two feet by two, with single leafets eleven inches by nine. The two-leaved convallaria and the *Smilacina racemosa* show ripening clusters. I hear incessantly a cricket or locust, inspired by the damp, cool shade, telling of autumn. I have not observed it more than a week. *Scutellaria galericulata*, maybe some time.

The berries of the *Vaccinium vacillans* are very abundant and large this year on Fair Haven, where I am now. Indeed these and huckleberries and blackberries are very abundant in this part of the town. Nature does her best to feed man. The traveller need not go out of the road to get as many as he wants; every bush and vine teems with palatable fruit. Man for once stands in such relation to Nature as the animals that pluck and eat as they go. The fields and hills are a table constantly spread. Wines of all kinds and qualities, of noblest vintage, are bottled up in the skins of

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countless berries, for the taste of men and animals. To men they seem offered not so much for food as for sociality, that they may picnic with Nature, — diet drinks, cordials, wines. We pluck and eat in remembrance of Her. It is a sacrament, a communion. The not-forbidden fruits, which no serpent tempts us to taste.[1] Slight and innocent savors, which relate us to Nature, make us her guests and entitle us to her regard and protection. It is a Saturnalia, and we quaff her wines at every turn. This season of berrying is so far respected that the children have à vacation to pick berries, and women and children who never visit distant hills and fields and swamps on any other errand are seen making haste thither now, with half their domestic utensils in their hands. The woodchopper goes into the swamp for fuel in the winter; his wife and children for berries in the summer.

The late rose, — *R. Carolina*, swamp rose, — I think has larger and longer leaves; at any rate they are duller above (light beneath), and the bushes higher. The shaggy hazelnuts now greet the eye, always an agreeable sight to me, with which when a boy I used to take the stains of berries out of my hands and mouth. These and green grapes are found at berry time. High blueberries, when thick and large, bending the twigs, are a very handsome cool, rich, acid berry.

On Fair Haven a quarter of an hour before sunset. — How fortunate and glorious that our world is not roofed in, but open like a Roman house, — our skylight so broad and open! We do not climb the hills in vain. It is no crystal palace we dwell in. The windows of the

[1] [Channing, pp. 71, 72.]

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sky are always open, and the storms blow in at them. The field sparrow sings with that varied strain. The night wind rises. On the eastern side of this hill it is already twilight. The air is cooler and clearer. The mountains which [were] almost invisible grow more distinct. The various heights of our hills are plainly shown by the more or less of the mountain bases seen from them. The atmosphere of the western horizon is impurpled, tingeing the mountains. A golden sheen is reflected from the river so brightly that it dazzles me as much as the sun. The now silver-plated river is burnished gold there, and in midst of all I see a boat ascending with regular dip of its seemingly gilt oars. That which appears a strip of smooth, light silvery water on each side of the stream, not reflecting the sky, is the reflection of light from the pads. From their edges, there stream into the smooth channel sharp blue serrations or ripples of various lengths, sometimes nearly across, where seemingly a zephyr gliding off the pads strikes it. A boy is looking after his cows, calling "ker ker ker ker," impatient to go home. The sun is passing under the portcullis of the west. The nighthawk squeaks, and the chewink jingles his strain, and the wood thrush; but I think there is no loud and general serenade from the birds. I hear no veery. How much more swiftly the sun seems to perform the morning and evening portions of his journey, when he is nearest his starting-place or goal! He is now almost ready to dip, — a round red disk shorn of his beams, — his head shaved like a captive led forth for execution.

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Meanwhile the night is rapidly gathering her forces in deepening lines of shade under the east side of the willow causeway and the woods. Now the sun has dipped into the western ocean. He is one half below the horizon, and I see lines of distinct forest trees, miles and miles away on some ridge, now revealed against his disk. It takes many a western woodland — go far enough, a whole Iowa — to span it. Now only the smallest segment of its sphere, like a coal of fire rising above the forest, is seen sending a rosy glow up the horizon sky. The illustrious traveller with whom we have passed a memorable day has gone his way, and we return slowly to our castle of the night. But for some minutes the glowing portal clouds are essentially unchanged.

Pycnanthemum muticum behind Wheeler's cottages; put it with the earliest of its class.

July 25. Dodder, probably the 21st. Blue-curls. Burdock, probably yesterday.

P. M. — To Le Grosse's.

Cerasus Virginiana, — choke-cherry, — just ripe. White and red huckleberries said to be in Le Grosse's or Wetherbee's pasture. Could not find them. *Cynoglossum Morisoni*, beggar's-lice, roadside between Sam Barrett's mill and the next house east, in flower and fruiting probably ten days. Probably the same with plant found beyond the stone bridge, gone to seed, last year.

I have for years had a great deal of trouble with my shoe-strings, because they get untied continually.

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They are leather, rolled and tied in a hard knot. But some days I could hardly go twenty rods before I was obliged to stop and stoop to tie my shoes. My companion and I speculated on the distance to which one tying would carry you, — the length of a shoe-tie, — and we thought it nearly as appreciable and certainly a more simple and natural measure of distance than a stadium, or league, or mile. Ever and anon we raised our feet on whatever fence or wall or rock or stump we chanced to be passing, and drew the strings once more, pulling as hard as we could. It was very vexatious, when passing through low scrubby bushes, to become conscious that the strings were already getting loose again before we had fairly started. What should we have done if pursued by a tribe of Indians? My companion sometimes went without strings altogether, but that loose way of proceeding was not [to] be thought of by me. One shoemaker sold us shoestrings made of the hide of a South American jackass, which he recommended; or rather he gave them to us and added their price to that of the shoes we bought of him. But I could not see that these were any better than the old. I wondered if anybody had exhibited a better article at the World's Fair, and whether England did not bear the palm from America in this respect. I thought of strings with recurved prickles and various other remedies myself. At last the other day it occurred to me that I would try an experiment, and, instead of tying two simple knots one over the other the same way, putting the end which fell to the right over each time, that I would reverse

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the process, and put it under the other. Greatly to my satisfaction, the experiment was perfectly successful, and from that time my shoe-strings have given me no trouble, except sometimes in untying them at night.

On telling this to others I learned that I had been all the while tying what is called a granny's knot, for I had never been taught to tie any other, as sailors' children are; but now I had blundered into a square knot, I think they called it, or two running slip-nooses. Should not all children be taught this accomplishment, and an hour, perchance, of their childhood be devoted to instruction in tying knots?

Those New-Hampshire-like pastures near Asa Melvin's are covered or dotted with bunches of indigo, still in bloom, more numerously than anywhere that I remember.

July 26. I reckon that about nine tenths of the flowers of the year have now blossomed.

Dog-days, — sultry, sticky (?) weather, — now when the corn is topped out. Clouds without rain. Rains when it will. Old spring and summer signs fail.

P. M. — To Fair Haven Hill.

The lycopodium which I see is not yet out. The *Potentilla Norvegica* is common and tall, the tallest and now most flourishing of the potentillas. The xyris, some time, on Hubbard's meadow, south of the water-plantain, whose large, finely branched, somewhat pyramidal panicle of flowers is attractive. The bobolinks are just beginning to fly in flocks, and I hear their *link link*. I see the young birds also, just

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able to get out of my way above the weeds and bushes of the low grounds, their tails not grown out to steady them. Larks, too, seen now, four or five together, sing as of yore; also the goldfinch twitters over oftener. That other kind of amaranth is apparently quite out in some places. The *Hypericum corymbosum*, which may have been out nearly as long as the *perforatum*. I see on all hands the hardhack's slender rosy pyramid spring above the walls and hedges. It is a fine coarse plant and must rank with the rhexia or near it. The broader, more cone-like meadow-sweet also. The swamp rose and the polygalas are other reds now in prime which I think of, not to include the orchis.[1] The small bluish-white berries of the trientalis appear to be ripe. *Gnaphalium polycephalum*, less downy and greener than the pearly one. I notice to-day the first purplish aster, a pretty sizable one; may have been out a day or two, near the brook beyond Hubbard's Grove, — *A. Radula* (*?*).

I mark again the sound of crickets or locusts about alders, etc., about this time when the first asters open, which makes you fruitfully meditative, helps condense your thoughts, like the *mel* dews in the afternoon. This the afternoon of the year. How apt we are to be reminded of lateness, even before the year is half spent! Such little objects check the diffuse tide of our thoughts and bring it to a head, which thrills us. They are such fruits as music, poetry, love, which humanity bears.

Saw one of the common wild roses (*R. lucida?*).

[1] But there are the cardinal, thistles, milkweeds, etc., etc.

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The swamp blackberry ripe in open ground. The *Rhus copallina* is not yet quite out, though the *glabra* is in fruit. The smaller purple fringed orchis has not quite filled out its spike. What a surprise to detect under the dark, damp, cavernous copse, where some wild beast might fitly prowl, this splendid flower, silently standing with all its eyes on you! It has a rich fragrance withal. Rain in the evening.

July 27. 8 A. M. — Rains, still quite soakingly. June and July perhaps only are the months of drought. The drought ceases with the dog-days.

P. M. — To White Pond in rain.

The autumnal dandelion now appears more abundantly within a week. *Solidago lanceolata* also, a few days probably, though only partially open.

July 28. 7 A. M. — To Azalea Brook.

The mikania is hardly out yet;[1] like the eupatoriums, shows its color long before it opens. The vernonia not quite yet. The lilies, though a little less numerous, appear freer from insects than at first. Their pads not so much eaten as those of the nuphar. The pickerel-weed has passed its prime. The petty-morel at the brook not out, though that by the Corner Spring has berries.

P. M. — To Clematis Brook *via* Lee's with Mr. Conway.[2]

[1] *Vide* 29th.

[2] [Rev. Moncure D. Conway. See his *Autobiography*, vol. i, pp.

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Tells me of a kind of apple tree with very thick leaves near the houses in Virginia called the tea-tree, under which they take tea, even through an ordinary shower, it sheds the rain so well, and there the table constantly stands in warm weather.

The *Gerardia flava* in the hickory grove behind Lee's Cliff, some days. Answers apparently in every respect to the above, yet its lower leaves are like narrow white oak leaves. Have I seen the *G. quercifolia*? Is that the *Cicuta bulbifera* just out at Clematis Brook, with decompound leaves and linear leafets fringe-toothed?[1] That low hieracium, hairy, especially the lower part, with several hairy, obovate or oblanceolate leaves, remotely, very slightly, toothed, and glandular hairs on peduncles and calyx, a few heads, some days at least. *Vide* herbarium. Saw lower leaves of the white vervain turned a reddish lake or claret. Nightshade berries begin to ripen, — to be red. Is that rather coarse flower about Mrs. Brooks's house (escaped from cultivation), called Bouncing Bet, and which has been open ten days or more, *Saponaria Vaccaria*, — cow-herb? The mullein pink is also escaped from gardens thereabouts. *Aster linariifolius.*

July 29. P. M. — To hibiscus, Beck Stow's, and Brister's Hill.

Galeopsis Tetrahit, a good while. Vernonia, just opened, a few central ones. *Polygonum hydropiper-*

141, 142, where he speaks of walking with Thoreau in the summer of 1853.]

[1] Yes.

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oides. At Vernonia Meadow I notice the beds of horse-mint now in flower, — bluish whorls of flowers, — now in its prime. Now is the time to gather thoroughwort. Cardinals are in their prime. The hibiscus is barely budded, but already the meadow-hay mowers have sheared close to it.

Most fields are so completely shorn now that the walls and fence-sides, where plants are protected, appear unusually rich. I know not what aspect the flowers would present if our fields and meadows were untouched for a year, if the mower were not permitted to swing his scythe there. No doubt some plants contended long in vain with these vandals, and at last withdrew from the contest. About these times some hundreds of men with freshly sharpened scythes make an irruption into my garden when in its rankest condition, and clip my herbs all as close as they can, and I am restricted to the rough hedges and worn-out fields which had little to attract them, to the most barren and worthless pastures. I know how some fields of johnswort and goldenrod look, left in the natural state, but not much about our richest fields and meadows.

Those huckleberries near the hibiscus are remarkably glossy, fresh, and plump in the lowland, but not so sweet as some. Crossed the river there, carrying over my clothes.

The Great Meadows present a very busy scene now. There are at least thirty men in sight getting the hay, revealed by their white shirts in the distance, the farthest mere specks, and here and there great loads of hay, almost concealing the two dor-bugs that

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draw them — and horse racks [*sic*] pacing regularly back and forth. It is refreshing to behold and scent even this wreck of the meadow-plants. Here is a man sedulously cocking up great heaps composed almost alone of flowering fern, yet perfectly green. Here are many owners side by side, each taking his slice of the great meadow. The mower fixes bits of newspaper to stakes in straight lines across the meadow to guide him, lest he cut over his bounds. The completion of haying might be celebrated by a farmers' festival.

The wormwood, perhaps; has hardly opened yet. Peter appears to have cut all the liatris before its time.[1] The *Solidago stricta* begins to yellow the Great Fields in front of his house, but the *nemoralis* is hardly out there yet. The crotalaria has some fully formed pods, together with flowers, a little further east than before. It must be three weeks old at least. The sight of the small rough sunflower about a dry ditch bank and hedge advances me at once further toward autumn. At the same time I hear a dry, ripe, autumnal chirp of a cricket. It is the next step to the first goldenrod. It grows where it escapes the mower, but no doubt, in our localities of plants, we do not know where they would prefer to grow if unmolested by man, but rather where they best escape his vandalism. How large a proportion of flowers, for instance, are referred to and found by hedges, walls, and fences.

I see three or four (apparently) young marsh hawks, but full grown, circling and tumbling about not much

[1] No.

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above the ground and playing with one another. They are quite a reddish brown. They utter a squeak (not a shrill scream), much like a small bird or animal. I noticed that my hen-hawks screamed and circled round their old nest yesterday, though their young must be fully grown.

Butterflies of various colors are now more abundant than I have seen them before, especially the small reddish or coppery ones. I counted ten yesterday on a single *Sericocarpus conyzoides*. They were in singular harmony with the plant, as if they made a part of it. The insect that comes after the honey or pollen of a plant is necessary to it and in one sense makes a part of it. Being constantly in motion and, as they moved, opening and closing their wings to preserve their balance, they presented a very lifesome scene. To-day I see them on the early goldenrod (*Solidago stricta*).

I broke through Heywood's thick wood, north of Moore's land, going toward Beck Stow's in the Great Fields, and unexpectedly came into a long, narrow, winding, and very retired blueberry swamp which I did not know existed there. A spot seemingly untrodden, — a deep withdrawn meadow, sunk low amid the forest and filled with green waving sedge, three feet high, and low andromeda and hardhack, for the most part dry to the feet and with no print of man or beast, interspersed with islands of blueberry bushes and surrounded by a dense hedge of high blueberry bushes, panicled andromeda, high choke-berry, wild holly, with its beautiful crimson

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berries, etc., etc., this being the front rank to a higher wood. Thus hedged about these places are, so that it is only at some late year that you stumble upon them. Crouching you thread your way amid some dense shrub oak wood some day, descending next through the almost impenetrable hedge, and stand to your surprise on the edge of this fair open meadow with a bottom of unfathomed mud, as retired and novel as if it were a thousand miles removed from your ordinary walks. Not penetrable except in midsummer. It is as far off as Persia from Concord. I entered from this swamp to that next south, through a narrow passage hardly a foot wide, stooping close to the ground, worn by some cows once, brushing off blueberries in my passage, and then burst out into another yet larger swamp, or meadow, of a similar character. And in the first I found great blueberries as big as old-fashioned bullets or cranberries, — the ambrosial fruit. These grew side by side in singular harmony in the dense hedge with crimson holly berries and black choke-berries. Over these meadows the marsh hawk circles undisturbed. What means this profusion of berries at this season only? Beck Stow's is much frequented by cows, which burst through the thickest bushes.

Crossed over to Tuttle's. Aaron's-rod not yet. The high blackberries began to be ripe about a week ago. The *small* flowers of the *Helianthemum Canadense* (cistus). Its leaves are like the *Lechea major*, for which I took it last (?) fall, when surrounded with frost at its base (hence called frost-weed). Started a pack of

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Butterfly on Joe-Pye-weed

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grouse two-thirds grown. *Spiranthes gracilis* in Hubbard's Wood Path, coming toward his Close. May have been out some time. *Hypopitys lanuginosa*, American pine-sap, just pushing up, — false beech-drops. Gray says from June to August. It is cream-colored or yellowish under the pines in Hubbard's Wood Path. Some near the fence east of the Close. A plant related to the tobacco-pipe. Remarkable this doubleness in nature, — not only that nature should be composed of just these individuals, but that there should be so rarely or never an individual without its kindred, — its cousin. It is allied to something else. There is not only the tobacco-pipe, but pine-sap. Moist banks covered with the nearly grown, but green, partridge-berries now. Prenanthes, almost. Tobacco-pipe, how long? Coral-root well out, — *Corallorhiza multiflora*, — at Brister's Hill. There are some beautiful glossy, firm ferns there, — *Polystichum acrostichoides* (?), — shield fern. Nature made ferns for pure leaves, to show what she could do in that line. I also see some small, umbrella-shaped (with sharp cones), shining and glossy yellow fungi, like an election cake atop, also some dead yellow and orange. Clethra, a day or two in some places. In the Poorhouse Meadow, the white orchis spike almost entirely out, some days at least. This is the best place to find the *Pycnanthemum muticum* and *lanceolatum* that I know. *Eupatorium purpureum.* We are willing this coarse plant should be called Joe-Pye-weed. *Rhus copallina* behind Bent's, out a day or two; earlier than at Cliffs. *Acalypha Virginica* probably out in

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some places; not the plant I saw. Some scarlet thorn leaves are yellow-spotted now. By railroad causeway a large smooth-stemmed goldenrod (not yet out), with smooth (both sides) linear-lanceolate sharply toothed leaves.[1] Another in a meadow, smaller, downy, with broader leaves, already out, like (?) the first. That was probably the *Scirpus lacustris*, — the black rush of the Sudbury meadows, long since out; panicle just below the top.

Perchance the moon shines sometimes merely to tempt men forth to view creation by night, but soon wanes to warn them that day is the season appointed for their labors.

July 30. I have for some time noticed the emersed leaves of the *Bidens Beckii* above the river surface, and this morning find the first flower. Last year I found none. Was it owing to the high water? The river has risen some since the dog-days. Wool-grass appears now in its prime. The weeds in the river seem to be subject to more casualties than elsewhere.

Many go to Europe *to finish their education*, and when they have returned their friends remark that the most they have acquired is a correct pronunciation of English. It is a premature hardening but hollowing of the shell. They become valuable utensils of the gourd kind, but have no palatable and nutritious inside. Instead of acquiring nutritious and palatable qualities to their pulp, it is all absorbed into a prematurely hardened shell. They went away squashes,

[1] *Solidago arguta?*

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and they return gourds. They are all expressed, or squeezed out; their essential oil is gone. They are pronounced for you; they are good to stand before or for a noun or man as handles; not even hollow gourds always, but the handle without the mug. They pronounce with the sharp precise report of a rifle, but the likeness is in the sound only, for they have no bullets to fire.

P. M. — To Ministerial Swamp.

Going through Dennis's and Hosmer's meadows, I see a dozen or more men at work. In almost every meadow throughout the town they are thus engaged at present. In every meadow you see far or near the lumbering hay-cart with its mountainous load and the rakers and mowers in white shirts. The bittern hardly knows where to lay its eggs. By the way, I have heard no stake-driver for some time. If the meadows were untouched, I should no doubt see many more of the rare white and the beautiful smaller purple orchis there, as I now see a few along the shaded brooks and meadow's edge.

The choke-cherries (*Cerasus Virginiana*) near Hosmer's Spring are very abundant now; the bushes, about as high as your head, are loaded with full racemes, two or three inches long, of shining dark-red berries, the size of a pea, slightly oblong or oval, but, as yet at least, very astringent, puckering the mouth for a long time. No doubt frequently mistaken at sight for the rum cherry.

The angelica has gone to seed, and its great umbels, six inches in diameter, are turned brown at the top

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of its still purple hollow stems, sometimes seven feet high, the joints two feet long, and one and one third inches in diameter. By a meandering line of tall bare stems, surmounted by dark, dry umbels, I can trace the course of Nut Meadow Brook for half a mile. Nay, I find it by their aid when concealed by the grass even within a rod of me, for they indicate every meander. They rise much above everything else in the meadow. Close at hand, also, this brook is seen to be lined with the slender *Cicuta maculata* — there is much of this poisonous plant in our meadows — and *bulbifera*, with their smaller white umbels. This is a good place to look for the latter. I suppose it is the *Rumex hydrolapathum*, or great water dock, now going to seed there, with large valves and three large glands. I find some fruit on the *Ribes hirtellum* in J. P. Brown's land. It is globular, smooth, and red, marked by internal meridian lines, and inclined to be flattened at the poles. This does not blossom so early as our earliest in garden, but its fruit is more like this in color (though more smooth and glossy), while our later one is a dark purple or blue. Rather acid and wild-tasted. Is that the *Cirsium horridulum*, now out of bloom, on the north side of T. Wheeler's meadow, with tall, downy stem and the lower leaves almost entire and downy both sides, upper clasping and cut? Apparently the same by the L. Hosmer road at Nut Meadow Brook in Brown's meadow. The painted-cup still, and there. I was correct about the alders. The *incana* has a rounder leaf; the other is more oblong and is quite smooth beneath. I have missed the veery

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for some time, but the wood thrush still sings and the peawai.

The wayfarer's tree! How good a name! Who bestowed it? How did it get adopted? The mass of men are very unpoetic, yet that Adam that names things is always a poet. The boor is ready to accept the name the poet gives. How nameless is the poet among us! He is abroad, but is not recognized. He does not get crowned with the laurel.

Goodyera pubescens on hillside south of Ministerial Swamp. Its veiny leaves, a hoary green, completely cover the ground on the damp and shady hillside, like a rug, sprinkled with dry oak leaves, which it has lifted as it grew. It is just sending up its green scapes amid the sere ones of last year, and one has partly blossomed. The hunter often sits on a shady bank and muses on this beautiful leaf, wondering what rare virtues it may possess.

The tobacco-pipe has also pushed up there amid the dry leaves in the shade. It is abundant now, and here. Both stem and flowers and scales are a pure and delicate crystalline white. What to name it? Sheathed with delicate white scales. It reminded me of a maiden in her robes of purity who has always been nurtured in a shady and vault-like seclusion, — a nun of spotless purity, a daughter of Tellus and Cælum too, making her entrance into the world. Pushing aside the doorway of dry leaves, three sisters of various heights issue from their hidden convent and stand side by side in the presence of the light. We are surprised to see such pure robes come from

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the bowels of the earth. Yet this white and crystalline purity smacks of the cellar and shade. They come forth to be proved, and stand abashed in presence of the light, with hanging heads and faces toward the ground under their pure white hoods and capes, striving at first to conceal their nakedness and tenderness. A few loose, scanty, but beautiful, pearly sheaths alone invested them, and the broader capes of their hoods. The sisters then came forth of spotless purity, but soon, exposed to light and air, their virtue dried black. I was surprised to hear that this was called the tobacco-pipe! Their untried virtue cannot long stand the light and air. These and pine-sap the plants the dog-days (?) produce.

Here, too, are clintonia berries and, with the neottia and the pyrolas, now generally almost out of bloom. *Lygodium palmatum* now apparently in bloom. It is a most beautiful slender and delicate fern, twining like [a] vine about the stem of the meadow-sweet, panicled andromeda, goldenrods, etc., to the height of three feet or more, and difficult to detach from them. The lower half, in the shade, of small leafy sterile frondlets, the upper half, exposed to the light, of the finely divided fertile frondlets. Our most beautiful fern, and most suitable for wreaths or garlands. It is rare. Round-leaved sundew for some time. Bartonia or centaurella almost out, not spread, somewhat like the former now. Tansy has been the prevailing yellow flower for some time. It precedes the goldenrods.

This month has not been so warm as June. There

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have been no such *bathing* days as we had last year, two or three. Methinks our warm weather hardest to bear is the last half of June and the first half of July. Afterward the shade and the dog-days give us moisture and coolness, especially at night.

Saw some green galls on a goldenrod (?) three quarters of an inch in diameter, shaped like a fruit or an Eastern temple, with two or three little worms inside, completely changing the destiny of the plant, showing the intimate relation between animal and vegetable life. The animal signifies its wishes by a touch, and the plant, instead of going on to blossom and bear its normal fruit, devotes itself to the service of the insect and becomes its cradle and food. It suggests that Nature is a kind of gall, that the Creator stung her and man is the grub she is destined to house and feed. The plant rounds off and paints the gall with as much care and love as its own flower and fruit, admiring it perchance even more.

I see a rusty-colored shorter-wooled cotton-grass, which may be the *Eriophorum Virginicum*.

July 31. *Sunday*. P. M. — To Walden.

The bristly aralia berries in dense patches with their numerous umbels, the central ones ripe for two or three days. They are about two inches in diameter and perfect hemispheres of dark-blue or blue-black berries, size of a huckleberry, on slender peduncles of equal length, forming a dense hemispherical umbel, two inches in diameter. I counted a hundred and thirty such berries in one. Rum cherry just ripe. Pur-

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ple gerardia by to-morrow or the next day; the linear-leafed gerardia. The anychia, or forked chickweed, grows larger, with spreading red stems, on the south side of Heywood Peak. The commonest *Lespideza violacea*, with small elliptical leaves, perhaps a week. *Desmodium nudiflorum*, naked-flowered tick-trefoil, some already with loments round-angled; probably more than a week; the tall, naked flowering stems, sometimes more than two feet high, appearing like separate plants, at some distance from the rest, which are much lower, about ten inches high, with a bunch of oval leaves. *Lespedeza hirta* out. I find also a trefoil plant with long, wand-like(?) panicled racemes, rising a foot or more above the leaves, with flowers turned a bluish or verdigris green, apparently wilted, and leaves below, about the simple stem, on short petioles, oblongish, one to two inches. May be *Desmodium Canadense* (?) or *lævigatum* (?) or — ? Somewhat downy-stemmed.[1] Some time — a week — out. Also in J. Hosmer's pines beyond Clamshell Hill. Also the *Gnaphalium decurrens*, to the eye much like the fragrant one near by, but a lighter green and very sticky. Pennyroyal well out for some days at least there, in large bushy tufts. White goldenrod. Bushy gerardia, showing no radical leaves yet. I see some galls on under side of hickory leaves, red like currants, hollow with a grub within. *Solidago nemoralis*. These desmodiums, etc., etc., on the south side of Heywood Peak,

[1] *Dillenii* ? ? *Vide* Aug. 14.

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a warm dry sprout-land, where I suspect they were not to be found before the wood was cut. They are very forward there. *Goodyera repens* well out at Corallorhiza Hillside; some time out. Put it close after the *gracilis*.

I calculate that less than forty species of flowers known to me remain to blossom this year.

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VI

AUGUST, 1853

(ÆT. 36)

Aug. 1. I think that that universal crowing of the chip-bird in the morning is no longer heard. Is it the *Galium circæzans* which I have seen so long on Heywood Peak and elsewhere, with four broad leaves, low and branched? Put it early in June.

Aug. 2. Heavy, long-continued, but warm rain in the night, raising the river already eight or nine inches and disturbing the meadow haymakers. John Legross brought me a quantity of red huckleberries yesterday. The less ripe are whitish. I suspect that these are the *white* huckleberries.

Sundown. — To Nawshawtuct.

The waxwork berries are yellowing. I am not sure but the bunches of the smooth sumach berries are handsomest when but partly turned, the crimson contrasting with the green, the green berries showing a velvety crimson cheek. *Geum Virginianum*, white avens (June to August, Gray), still in bloom by the sassafras hedge, south side of hill, looks as if it might be a white cinquefoil, with small hook-prickled burs. Put it in June. Mulgedium out. The green fruit of the carrion-flower forms dense, firm, spherical umbels (?) at the end of stems five or six inches long;

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umbels two inches in diameter, formed, one of them, of eighty-four berries, size of peas, three to six sided, closely wedged together on peduncles three quarters of an inch long. The whole feels hard and solid in the hand.

Aug. 3. To north part of Framingham, surveying near Hopestill Brown's (in Sudbury).

He said there was a tame deer in the wood, which he saw in his field the day before. Told me of an otter killing a dog and partly killing another. He sold lately a white pine tree about four feet [in] diameter at butt, which brought twenty-three dollars, not including what was used for fuel, and they sawed eighty feet in length of it. Saw the *Solidago odora* in the woods there, but not in bloom nearly; leaves full of pellucid dots and yielding, after being in my pocket all day, a very pleasant fragrance. Many farmers are now troubled to get their meadow-hay since the rise of the river. Sand cherries, probably a good while.

Aug. 4. Rain last night and to-day again. Ground-nut. The low fields which have been mown now look very green again in consequence of the rain, as if it were a second spring. Aaron's-rod, not yet. A sicyos in front of the Vose house, not quite, but probably somewhere now. *Symphytum officinale* still in bloom in front of C. Stow's, over the fence. *Polygonum Careyi*, four feet high, gigantesque, bristly-glandular, with swollen joints (*poly-gonum*), many branches from near ground.

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Aug. 5. Perfect dog-days. To-day is sultry, *i. e.* hot and cloudy, the air full of mist and here and there misty clouds; and you find yourself perspiring much before you are aware of it. Farmers complain that they cannot make hay this weather. I cannot dry my red huckleberries. The sun does not shine unobstructedly.

A man mowing in the Great Meadows killed a great water adder (?) the other day, said to be four feet long and as big as a man's wrist. It ran at him. They find them sometimes when they go to open their hay. I tried to see it this morning, but some boys had chopped it up and buried it. They said that they found a *great many* young ones in it. That probably accounts for its being so large round. The clintonia berries keep a long time without wrinkling in a tumbler of water. The mower on the river meadows, when [he] comes to open his hay these days, encounters some overgrown water adder full of young (?) and bold in defense of its progeny, and tells a tale when he comes home at night which causes a shudder to run through the village, — how it came at him, and he ran, and it pursued and overtook him, and he transfixed it with a pitchfork and laid it on a cock of hay, but it revived and came at him again. This is the story he tells in the shops at evening. The big snake is a sort of fabulous animal. It is always as big as a man's arm and of indefinite length. Nobody knows exactly how deadly its bite, but nobody is known to have been bitten and recovered. Irishmen introduced into these meadows for the first time, on seeing a snake, a creature which they have seen only in pictures before, lay down their

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scythes and run as if it were the evil one himself, and cannot be induced to return to their work. They sigh for Ireland, where they say there is no venomous thing that can hurt you.

Inula out (how long?), roadside just beyond Garfield's. Spikenard berries near Corner Spring just begin to turn. Collinsonia, not yet. Cohush berries not quite ripe. Pennyroyal in prime on Conantum. *Aster corymbosus* pretty plainly (a day or two) in the Miles Swamp or arboretum, — *Aster dumosus*, as I have called it also elsewhere.

Aug. 6. More dog-days. The sun, now at 9 A. M., has not yet burst through the mists. It has been warmer weather for a week than for at least three weeks before, — nights when all windows were left open, though not so warm as in June. This morning a very heavy fog. The sun has not risen clear or even handsomely for some time, nor have we had a good sunset.

P. M. — To J. Farmer's Cliff.

I see the sunflower's broad disk now in gardens, probably a few days, — a true sun among flowers, monarch of August. Do not the flowers of August and September generally resemble suns and stars? — sunflowers and asters and the single flowers of the golden-rod. I once saw one as big as a milk-pan, in which a mouse had its nest.

It is remarkable how many plants turn lake — some of their leaves I mean — in the fall. Already I notice that the lower leaves of some catnep and a white vervain (2d) have so turned. They are in fact matured,

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and high-colored or wine-colored like the fruits. It suggests that the whole plant tends toward an equal richness and maturity and to become one flower. It is the blush of its evening sky. Its juices are no longer crude. I have seen some red leaves on the low choke-berry. Now begins the vintage of their juices. Nature is now a Bacchanal, drunk with the wines of a thousand plants and berries.

The rudbeckia must have been out at least a week or more; half the buds have opened. Cranberries show red cheeks, and some are wholly red, like varnished cherry wood. Yesterday I ate early summer apples. The huckleberries were many of them burst open in consequence of the copious rains. And now it begins to rain again and compels us to return.

Aug. 7. *Sunday.* P. M. — To Fair Haven Hill *via* Hubbard's Grove.

The krigia has bloomed again. The purple gerardia now fairly out, which I found almost out last Sunday in another place. Elder-berries begin to be ripe, bending their stems. I also see *Viburnum dentatum* berries just beginning to turn on one side. Their turning or ripening looks like decay, — a dark spot, — and so does the rarely ripe state of the naked viburnum and the sweet; but we truly regard it as a ripening still, and not falsely a decaying as when we describe the tints of the autumnal foliage.

I think that within a week I have heard the alder cricket, — a clearer and shriller sound from the leaves in low grounds, a clear shrilling out of a cool moist

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shade, an autumnal sound. The year is in the grasp of the crickets, and they are hurling it round swiftly on its axle. Some wasps (I am not sure there 's more than one) are building a nest in my room, of mud, these days, buzzing loudly while at work, but at no other time. Often and often I hear the cool twitter of the goldfinch passing over, — a sound one with that of the alder cricket, — and the bobolink's *link link*. How much of spring there is brought back in a young bluebird's plaintive peep!

The tall buttercup lingers still and the houstonia, not to mention the marsh speedwell and the slender bellflower.

Now for the herbs, — the various mints. The pennyroyal is out abundantly on the hills. I do not scent these things enough. Would it not be worth the while to devote a day to collecting the mountain mint, and another to the peppermint?

How trivial and uninteresting and wearisome and unsatisfactory are all employments for which men will pay you money! The ways by which you may get money all lead downward. To have done anything by which you earned money merely is to have been truly idle. If the laborer gets no more than the wages his employer pays him, he is cheated, he cheats himself. Those services which the world will most readily pay for, it is most disagreeable to render. You are paid for being something less than a man. The state will pay a genius only for some service which it is offensive to him to render. Even the poet-laureate would rather not have to celebrate the accidents of royalty.[1]

[1] [*Cape Cod, and Miscellanies*, pp. 458, 459; *Misc.*, Riv. 257, 258.]

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Dangle-berries have begun. Wormwood perhaps here and not before.

It is worth the while to walk in wet weather; the earth and leaves are strewn with pearls. When I came forth it was cloudy and from time to time drizzling weather, but remarkably still (and warm enough), soothing and inducing reflection. The river is dark and smooth these days, reflecting no brightness but dark clouds, and the goldfinch is heard twittering over; though presently a thicker mist or mizzle falls, and you are prepared for rain. The river and brooks have somewhat overflown their banks, and water inundates the grass and weeds, making it look late and cool. The stillness and the shade enable you to collect and concentrate your thoughts.

I see the leaves of the two smallest johnsworts reddening. The common johnswort is quite abundant this year and still yellows the fields. I see everywhere in sandy fields the blue-curls, knocked off by the rain, strewing the ground. As I was walking along a hillside the other day, I smelled pennyroyal, but it was only after a considerable search that I discovered a single minute plant, which I had trodden on, the only one near. When, yesterday, a boy spilled his huckleberries in the pasture, I saw that Nature was making use of him to disperse her berries, and I might have advised him to pick another dishful.[1] The three kinds of

[1] ["Then there were huckleberrying parties. These were under the guidance of Thoreau, because he alone knew the precise locality of every variety of the berry. I recall an occasion when little Edward Emerson, carrying a basket of fine huckleberries, had a fall and spilt them all. Great was his distress, and our offers of berries could not

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epilobium grow rankly where Hubbard burned his swamp this year, also erechthites. I think that I have observed that this last is a true fireweed.

Is it not as language that all natural objects affect the poet? He sees a flower or other object, and it is beautiful or affecting to him because it is a symbol of his thought, and what he indistinctly feels or perceives is matured in some other organization. The objects I behold correspond to my mood.

The past has been a remarkably wet week, and now the earth is strewn with fungi. The earth itself is mouldy. I see a white mould in the path. Great toadstools stand in the woods, but the mushroom growth of a night is already attacked by many worms and insects. I see in the pasture grass in many places small white roundish fungi, like eggs. Methinks the mosquitoes are not a very serious evil till the somewhat *cool* muggy dog-day nights, such as we have had of late.

I was struck by the perfect neatness, as well as elaborateness and delicacy, of a lady's dress the other day. She wore some worked lace or gauze over her bosom, and I thought it was beautiful, if it indicated an equal inward purity and delicacy, — if it was the soul she dressed and treated thus delicately.

console him for the loss of those gathered by himself. But Thoreau came, put his arm around the troubled child, and explained to him that if the crop of huckleberries was to continue it was necessary that some should be scattered. Nature had provided that little boys should now and then stumble and sow the berries. We shall have a grand lot of bushes and berries in this spot, and we shall owe them to you. Edward began to smile." — Moncure Daniel Conway, *Autobiography*, Boston, 1904, vol. i, p. 148.]

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Before I came out, I saw a bee at work in a flower again in spite of mist and cloud. And here again, far in the fields by the river-bank under Fair Haven, I heard a faint but all-pervading music, while passing with care amid the dripping bushes, but did not know whether it was a distant horn or some bee about a flower near at hand. It is so still that the bees' hum is now surely heard, for they still persist in making honey. I see the tall anemone abundant and fresh yet, — both its flower and teasel-shaped bur. Mists, but not driving.

Here is the barber sailing up the still, dark, cloud-reflecting river in the long boat which he built so elaborately himself, with two large sails set. He is quite alone thus far from town, and so quiet and so sensibly employed, — bound to Fair Haven Bay, instead of meeting comrades in a shop on the Mill-Dam or sleeping away his Sabbath in a chamber, — that I think of him as having experienced religion. I know so much good of him, at least, that one dark, still Sunday he sailed alone from the village to Fair Haven Bay. What chance was there to serve the devil by that excursion? If he had had a companion I should have had some doubts, — but being alone, it seemed communion day with him.

When I see, as now climbing Fair Haven, the hills covered with huckleberry and blueberry bushes bent to the ground with fruit, — so innocent and palatable a fruit, — I think of them as fruits fit to grow on Olympus, the ambrosia of the gods, and am reminded of *Vaccinium Vitis-Idæa*. It does not occur to me at first that where such a thought is suggested is Mt.

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Olympus and that I who taste these berries am a god. Why, in his only royal moments, should man abdicate his throne?

Lespedeza capitata at Lupine Bank, maybe a day or two, but I should say later than the *polystachya*. Its leaves longer and more pointed. The birds for some weeks have not sung as in the spring. Do I not already hear the jays with more distinctness, as in the fall and winter? I hear the chewink still. The narrow-leaved violet lespedeza, not yet.

In the open oak wood beneath the Cliff, in the steep path and by its side, the *Gerardia quercifolia* and also *flava*. The former is glaucous and all the leaves much cut, rather pinnate, as I remember, somewhat like Roman wormwood, but the calyx-lobes triangular and not more than a third or a fourth the length of the calyx-tube. The peduncles longer than the calyx. It differs from Gray's *G. quercifolia* in the calyx-lobes not being long and linear. I will put it with *G. flava*. These are both among the most remarkable flowers at present, so large and butter-yellow. Very rich they look, with their great trumpets. A bee has eaten a round hole in the side of an unopened flower. How few flowers and fruits blossom and ripen without being deformed by worms and insects! You must search long for perfect specimens. The panicled hieracium is abundant there, and has been open probably a few days, — two or three.

I find the *Solidago odora* out by the path to foot of cliffs beyond Hayden's, maybe twenty or thirty rods into woods about the summit level. It is said to have

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the odor of anise. It is somewhat like that of sassafras bark. It must be somewhat dried and then bruised. The rough goldenrod (*Solidago altissima*), a day or two. I will call that sharply serrate narrow or linear(?)-lanceolate leafed, smooth-stemmed, very *tall* goldenrod, with a large, broad, dense pyramidal head or panicle drooping every way, which grows under the railroad bank against Ebby Hubbard's land, the *S. arguta* for the present. It has been out, say one week or more.

Aug. 8. 5 A. M. — Up railroad.

The nabalus, which may have been out one week elsewhere. Also rough hawkweed, and that large aster-like flower *Diplopappus umbellatus*, a day or two. Smooth speedwell again. Erechthites. Columbine again. The first watermelon. *Aster patens* and *Aster lævis*, both a day or two.

Aug. 9. *Sedum Telephium*, garden orpine or live-for-ever, in my pitcher.

P. M. — To hibiscus and liatris and Beck Stow's.

The hibiscus which has escaped the mowers shows a little color. I am rather surprised that it escapes the mowers at all. The river is still much swollen by the rains and cooled, and the current is swifter; though it is quite hot this afternoon, with a close, melting heat. I see an empty hay-team slowly crossing the river, in the shallowest place. The oxen are half concealed, but the driver rides high and dry. The cattle must enjoy the coolness of the water. They have not got more than half the hay out of the meadows yet, and now they

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are so wet I see but one team there. Much grass will be lost. If you carelessly grasp and let slip through your hand a blade of this cut-grass as you walk, it will often cut your fingers seriously. I forded the river and, for the experiment, tried swimming with one hand while I held up all my clothes with the other, for a short distance.

The *Hieracium Canadense* is out and is abundant at Peter's well. I also find one or two heads of the liatris. Perhaps I should have seen it a *few* days earlier, if it had not been for the mower. It has the aspect of a Canada thistle at a little distance. How fatally the season is advanced toward the fall! I am not surprised now to see the small rough sunflower. There is much yellow beside now in the fields. How beautiful now the early goldenrods (*Solidago stricta*), rising above the wiry grass of the Great Fields in front of Peter's where I sit (which is not worth cutting), not solid yellow like the sunflower, but little pyramidal or sheaf-like golden clouds or mists, supported by almost invisible leafy columns, which wave in the wind, like those elms which run up very tall and slender without a branch and fall over like a sheaf on every side! They give a very indefinite but rich, mellow, and golden aspect to the field. They are the more agreeable for the indistinctness of their outline, — these pillars of fire, clouds which glow only on one side. The *nemoralis*, just opening, with its one-sided, curved, and dense panicle, is more concealed by the grass. The field is ripe.

Next into Heywood's blueberry swamp. I spend the forenoon in my chamber, writing or arranging my

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papers, and in the afternoon I walk forth into the fields and woods. I turn aside, perchance, into some withdrawn, untrodden swamp, and find these bilberries, large and fair, awaiting me in inexhaustible abundance, for I have no tame garden. They embody for me the essence and flavor of the swamp, — cool and refreshing, of various colors and flavors. I prefer the large blue, with a bloom on them, and slightly acid ones. I taste and am strengthened. This is the season of small fruits. I trust, too, that I am maturing some small fruit as palatable in these months, which will communicate my flavor to my kind. Here they hang for many weeks unchanged, in dense clusters, half a dozen touching each other, — black, blue, and intermediate colors. Our appreciation of their flavor commonly prevents our observing their beauty, though we admire the color of the holly berries which are their neighbors. If they were poisonous, we should hear more of their beauty to the eye.

You hear the peculiar scream of young hawks nowadays, — the marsh hawks, reddish beneath, which have not their perfect plumage. I plucked a great toadstool to-day, nine inches in diameter and five high, with a stem like the bole of an oak, swelling above and below, and at the smallest one and a half inches in diameter; its top slightly curving like a great election cake. Saw pigeons the other day (August 5).

Aug. 10. 5 A. M. — I hear a warbling vireo, golden robin, red-eye, and peawais.

August, royal and rich. Green corn now, and melons

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have begun. That month, surely, is distinguished when melons ripen. July could not do it. What a moist, fertile heat now! I see naked viburnum berries beginning to turn. Their whiteness faintly blushing.

Alcott spent the day with me yesterday. He spent the day before with Emerson. He observed that he had got his wine and now he had come after his venison. Such was the compliment he paid me. The question of a livelihood was troubling him. He knew of nothing which he could do for which men would pay him. He could not compete with the Irish in cradling grain. His early education had not fitted him for a clerkship. He had offered his services to the Abolition Society, to go about the country and speak for freedom as their agent, but they declined him. This is very much to their discredit; they should have been forward to secure him. Such a connection with him would confer unexpected dignity on their enterprise. But they cannot tolerate a man who stands by a head above them. They are as bad — Garrison and Phillips, etc. — as the overseers and faculty of Harvard College. They require a man who will train well *under* them. Consequently they have not in their employ any but small men, — trainers.

P. M. — To Walden and Saw Mill Brook.

These days are very warm, though not so warm as it was in June. The heat is furnace-like while I am climbing the steep hills covered with shrubs on the north of Walden, through sweet-fern as high as one's head. The goldfinch sings *er, twe, twotter twotter.* I see again the *Aster patens* (*amplexicaulis* of Bigelow),

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though this has no branches nor minute leaves atop. Yet it differs from the *A. undulatus*, not yet out plainly, in that the latter's lower leaves are petioled and hearted, with petioles winged at base. Find the *Arabis Canadensis*, or sickle-pod, on Heywood Peak, nearly out of bloom. Never saw it before. New plants spring up where old woods are cut off, having formerly grown here, perchance. Many such rarer plants flourish for a few years in such places before they are smothered. I have also found here, for example, round-leaved and naked-flowered desmodium and *Desmodium lævigatum* (??) and *Gnaphalium decurrens* and queria. Toadstools, which are now very abundant in the woods since the rain, are of various colors, — some red and shining, some polished white, some regularly brown-spotted, some pink, some light-blue, — buttons. The *Ranunculus repens* numerously out about Britton's Spring. A small red maple there, seven or eight feet high, all turned scarlet. It is glorious to see those great shining high blackberries, now partly ripe there, bending the bushes in moist, rocky sprout-lands, down amid the strong, bracing scented, tender ferns, which you crush with your feet. The whorled polygala in the Saw Mill Brook Path, beyond the *Desmodium paniculatum*, may have been out as long as the caducous. Is not that small narrow fern I find on Conantum about rocks ebony spleenwort? Now in fruit. The trillium fruit (varnished and stained cherry wood) now ripe. Boehmeria in prime, for long time. Cohush berries ripe. By Everett's wall beyond Cheney's, small rough sunflowers, six feet high, with many branches and flowers. Saw an

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alder locust this morning. Hear a quail now. Of late, and for long time, only the *link, link* of bobolink.

Aug. 11. 5 A. M. — Up North Branch.

A considerable fog. The weeds still covered by the flood, so that we have no *Bidens Beckii*. *B. chrysanthemoides* just out. The small, dull, lead-colored berries of the *Viburnum dentatum* now hang over the water. The *Amphicarpæa monoica* appears not to have bloomed. Chickweed (*Stellaria media*) appears the most constant flower and most regardless of seasons. Cerastium blooms still. Button-bush and mikania now in prime, and cardinals. Lilies rather scarce (?), but methinks less infested with insects. The river sprinkled with meadow-hay afloat.

P. M. — To Conantum.

This is by some considered the warmest day of the year thus far; but, though the weather is melting hot, yet the river having been deepened and cooled by the rains, we have none of those bathing days of July, '52. Yesterday or day before, I heard a strange note, methought from somebody's poultry, and looking out saw, I think a bittern, go squawking over the yard — from the river southwestward. A bittern, flying over, mingles its squawk with the cackling of poultry. Did I not hear a willet yesterday? At the Swamp Bridge Brook, flocks of cow troopials now about the cows. These and other blackbirds, flying in flocks now, make a great chattering, and also the bobolinks. What a humming of insects about the sweet-scented clethra blossoms, —

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honey-bees and others, and flies and various kinds of wasps!

I see some naked viburnum berries red and some purple now. There are berries which men do not use, like choke-berries, which here in Hubbard's Swamp grow in great profusion and blacken the bushes. How much richer we feel for this unused abundance and superfluity! Nature would not appear so rich, the profusion so rich, if we knew a use for everything.

Plums and grapes, about which gardeners make such an ado, are in my opinion poor fruits compared with melons.

The great rains have caused those masses of small green high blueberries, which commonly do not get ripe, to swell and ripen, so that their harvest fulfills the promise of their spring. I never saw so many, — even in swamps where a fortnight ago there was no promise.

What a helpless creature a horse is out of his element or off his true ground! Saw John Potter's horse mired in his meadow, which has been softened by the rains. His small hoofs afford no support. He is furious, as if mad, and is liable to sprain himself seriously. His hoofs go through the crust like stakes, into the soft batter beneath, though the wheels go well enough. Woodbine is reddening in some places, and ivy too. Collinsonia just begun.

Found —— rather garrulous (his breath smelled of rum). Was complaining that his sons did not get married. He told me his age when he married (thirty-odd years ago), how his wife bore him eight children and

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then died, and in what respect she proved herself a true woman, etc., etc. I saw that it was as impossible to speak of marriage to such a man — to the mass of men — as of poetry. Its advantages and disadvantages are not such as they have dreamed of. Their marriage is prose or worse. To be married at least should be the one poetical act of a man's life. If you fail in this respect, in what respect will you succeed? The marriage which the mass of men comprehend is but little better than the marriage of the beasts. It would be just as fit for such a man to discourse to you on the love of flowers, thinking of them as hay for his oxen.

The difference between men affects every phase of their lives, so that at last they cannot communicate with each other. An old man of average worth, who spoke with the downrightness and frankness of age, not exaggerating aught, said he was troubled about his water, etc., — altogether of the earth.

Evening draws on while I am gathering bundles of pennyroyal on the further Conantum height. I find it amid the stubble mixed with blue-curls and, as fast as I get my hand full, tie it into a fragrant bundle. Evening draws on, smoothing the waters and lengthening the shadows, now half an hour or more before sundown. What constitutes the charm of this hour of the day? Is it the condensing of dews in the air just beginning, or the grateful increase of shadows in the landscape? Some fiat has gone forth and stilled the ripples of the lake; each sound and sight has acquired ineffable beauty. How agreeable, when the sun shines at this angle, to stand on one side and look down on flourish-

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ing sprout-lands or copses, where the cool shade is mingled in greater proportion than before with the light! Broad, shallow lakes of shadow stretch over the lower portions of the top of the woods. A thousand little cavities are filling with coolness. Hills and the least inequalities in the ground begin to cast an obvious shadow. The shadow of an elm stretches quite across the meadow. I see pigeons (?) in numbers fly up from the stubble. I hear some young bluebird's plaintive warble near me and some young hawks uttering a puling scream from time to time across the pond, to whom life is yet so novel. From far over the pond and woods I hear also a farmer calling loudly to his cows, in the clear still air, "Ker, ker, ker, ker."

What shall we name this season? — this very late afternoon, or very early evening, this severe and placid season of the day, most favorable for reflection, after the insufferable heats and the bustle of the day are over and before the dampness and twilight of evening! The serene hour, the Muses' hour, the season of reflection! It is commonly desecrated by being made tea-time. It begins perhaps with the very earliest condensation of moisture in the air, when the shadows of hills are first observed, and the breeze begins to go down, and birds begin again to sing. The pensive season. It is earlier than the "chaste eve" of the poet. Bats have not come forth. It is not twilight. There is no dew yet on the grass, and still less any early star in the heavens. It is the turning-point between afternoon and evening. The few sounds now heard, far or near, are delicious. It is not more dusky and obscure, but clearer than

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before. The clearing of the air by condensation of mists more than balances the increase of shadows. Chaste eve is merely *preparing* with "dewy finger" to draw o'er all "the gradual dusky veil." Not yet "the ploughman homeward plods his weary way," nor owls nor beetles are abroad. It is a season somewhat earlier than is celebrated by the poets. There is not such a sense of lateness and approaching night as they describe. I mean when the first emissaries of Evening come to smooth the lakes and streams. The poet arouses himself and collects his thoughts. He postpones tea indefinitely. Thought has taken her siesta. Each sound has a broad and deep relief of silence.

Aug. 12. 9 A. M. — To Conantum by boat, berrying, with three ladies.

You now see and hear no red-wings along the river as in spring. See the blue herons opposite Fair Haven Hill, as if they had bred here. This and the last day or two *very* hot. Now at last, methinks, the most melting season of this year, though I think it is hardly last year's *bathing* time, because the water is higher. There is very little air over the water, and when I dip my head in it for coolness, I do not feel any coolness. The *Eupatorium sessilifolium* has been out a day or two on the side-hill grove at Bittern Cliff; very similar its leaves and form to the small sunflower. *Desmodium Canadense* (?), apparently a good while; perhaps with the earliest. Never saw it before. Has dense racemes of large flowers and pods. In the same place. I find, on the Cliff there, a *Gerardia quercifolia* which answers to

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the book (Gray), though I have not perhaps the *lowest* leaves. It has the linear-lanceolate segments of calyx. My last had not, though it was glaucous and was much more cut-leaved. There are varieties of the glaucous, then. They are both less densely spiked than the *flava*. Panicled cornel berries begin. The river cornel berries just beginning in this sunny place. *Chelone glabra* also. The round-leaved desmodium, a good while, and still on the hillside beyond the elm; perhaps ten days. Was that a thistle-down over the river, without the seed? [1] Carried watermelons for drink. What more refreshing and convenient! This richest wine in a convenient cask, and so easily kept cool! No foreign wines could be so grateful. The first muskmelon to-day. If you would cool a watermelon, do not put it in water, which keeps the heat in, but cut it open and set it in a cellar or in the shade.[2] If you have carriage, carry these green bottles of wine. A good many lilies yet rested in the shade under the bridges.

Aug. 13. The last was a melting night, and a carnival for mosquitoes. Could I not write meditations under a bridge at midsummer? The last three or four days less dogdayish. We paused under each bridge yesterday, — we who had been sweltering on the quiet waves, — for the sake of a little shade and coolness, holding on by the piers with our hands. Now and then a muskrat made the water boil, which dove or came up near by. They will move so suddenly in the water when alarmed as to make quite a report.

[1] Yes.

[2] Or in a draught.

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P. M. — To hibiscus by boat.

Hibiscus just beginning to open, its large cylindrical buds, as long as your finger, fast unrolling. They look like loosely rolled pink cigars. Rowed home in haste before a black approaching storm from the northeast, which was slightly cooling the air. How grateful when, as I backed through the bridges, the breeze of the storm blew through the piers, rippling the water and slightly cooling the sultry air! How fast the black cloud came up, and passed over my head, proving all wind! Gardeners complain that their fruit is fast rotting. We have had such wet and then moist, sultry weather that apples and plums ripen and decay very fast. Sicyos well out, and probably began when I saw it before.

Aug. 14. *Sunday.* 5 A. M. — To Cliffs.

The toads probably ceased about the time I last spoke of them. Bullfrogs, also, I have not heard for a long time.

I perceive the scent of the *earliest* ripe apples in my walk. How it surpasses all their flavors! *Lespedeza violacea* var. *angustifolia* at Cliffs, *a day or two.* The bushy gerardia makes a show there now. When I came out on to the wet rock by the juniper, all green with moss and with the driving mists beneath me, — for the sun did not come out till seven, — it reminded me of mountain-tops which I have visited.

P. M. — To Walden, Saw Mill Brook, Flint's Pond.

Locust days, — sultry and sweltering. I hear them even till sunset. The usually invisible but far-heard

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locust. In Thrush Alley a lespedeza out of bloom, with downy stem two feet high, and oblanceolate leaves one half by one and three quarters inches, and dry pods the whole length in the axils, as if between *L. capitata* and *violacea*.

I find on Heywood Peak two similar desmodiums of apparently the same date, — one that of July 31st, which I will call for the present *D. Dillenii*, two or three feet high, curving upward, many stems from a centre, with oval-lanceolate leaves, one to two inches long, and a long, loose, open panicle of flowers, which turn blue-green in drying, stem somewhat downy and upper sides of leaves smooth and silky to the lips; the other, which I will call *D. Marylandicum*, of similar habit (and date), but a little smaller and the leaves rhombic ovate and blunt, and some of the lower round, about three quarters of an inch long, and *stem quite smooth*, or some a little roughened; also by Woodside Path to White Pond; flowers turn blue-green in drying.

In the low woodland paths full of rank weeds, there are countless great fungi of various forms and colors, the produce of the warm rains and muggy weather of a week ago, now rapidly dissolving. One great one, more than a foot in diameter, with a stem $2\frac{1}{2}+$ inches through and 5 inches high, and which has sprung up since I passed here on the 10th, is already sinking like lead into that portion already melted. The ground is covered with foul spots where they have dissolved, and for *most* of my *walk* the air is tainted with a musty, carrion-like odor, in some places very offensive, so that I at first suspected a dead horse or cow. They impress me

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like humors or pimples on the face of the earth, toddy-blossoms, by which it gets rid of its corrupt blood. A sort of excrement they are. It never occurred to me before to-day that those different forms belong to one species. Some I see just pushing up in the form of blunt cones, thrusting the leaves aside, and, further along, some which are perfectly flat on top, probably the same in full bloom, and others decaying and curved up into a basin at the edges. This misty and musty dog-day weather has lasted now nearly a month, as I remember, beginning gradually from the middle of July.

The *Desmodium paniculatum* [1] which was not out on the 10th, now, say the 12th, by Saw Mill Brook Path. The *Aster acuminatus* in the copse near by. I found it last year, but where? [2] I find no grass balls yet. The dangle-berry found now, on tall glaucous-leaved bushes in low ground, is the handsomest of our gaylussacias, — smooth, round, and blue, larger than most, but with a tough skin and perhaps a slight astringency. Altogether a very handsome bush and berry. I hear no wood thrushes for a week. The pea-wai still, and sometimes the golden robin. Methinks the reign of the milkweeds is over.

Aug. 15. Rain again in the night, but now clear. Though the last week has been remarkably warm, the warmest in the year, the river, owing to the rains, has not been warm enough for perfect bathing, as in July,

[1] *Vide* August 16th.

[2] On Pack Monadnock; also near *Aster Radula* in Potter's Swamp, three feet high.

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'52. It was lowest (thus far) in July this year, before these rains. It has been melting weather; hundreds sunstruck in New York. Sultry, mosquitoey nights, with both windows and door open, and scarcely a sheet to be endured. But now it is cooler at last.

P. M. — To White Pond *via* Dugan's.

The air is somewhat cooler and beautifully clear at last after all these rains. Instead of the late bluish mistiness, I see a distinct, dark shade under the edge of the woods, the effect of the luxuriant foliage seen through the clear air. The vision goes bounding buoyantly far over the plains. It is a pleasure to look at the washed woods far away. You see every feature of the white pine grove with distinctness, — the stems of the trees, then the dark shade, then their fresh sunlit outsides. The mists are washed and cleared away, and behind them is seen the offspring of the rank vegetation which they nourished, an inky darkness as of night under the edge of the woods and the hedges, now at noonday heralding the evening of the year. The fields are remarkably green with a short, firm sward, and the crickets chirp with a still more autumnal sound.

Bathed at Clamshell Hill. There are perhaps four clams there under each foot. It will be long before the native clam will be extinct, like the Wellfleet oysters. That long, crinkled red gall on shrub oak stems. *Bidens frondosa.* More of the *Desmodium Marylandicum* (it is pretty plainly this), in the wood-side path to White Pond. The leaves of a rubus scored by some worm or insect, *i. e.* eaten half through, leaving whitish, serpen-

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tine, ribbon-like lines, doubling on themselves. Some have looked [to] find some mystic alphabet in such things. Hips are reddening.

Aug. 16. P. M. — To Flint's Pond with Mr. Conway. Started a woodcock in the woods. Also saw a large telltale, I think yellow-shanks, whose note I at first mistook for a jay's, giving the alarm to some partridges. The *Polygonum orientale*, probably some days, by Turnpike Bridge, a very rich rose-color large flowers, distinguished by its salver-shaped upper sheaths. It is a color as rich, I think, as that of the cardinal-flower. *Desmodium paniculatum* in the wood-path northeast of Flint's Pond. Its flowers turn blue-green in drying.

Yesterday also in the Marlborough woods, perceived everywhere that offensive mustiness of decaying fungi.

How earthy old people become, — mouldy as the grave! Their wisdom smacks of the earth. There is no foretaste of immortality in it. They remind me of earthworms and mole crickets.[1]

Aug. 17. Rain in forenoon.

The high blackberries are now in their prime; the richest berry we have. That wild black currant by Union Turnpike ripe (in gardens some time). The knapweed now conspicuous, like a small thistle. Did I set it down too early? Rain, rain, rain again! Good for grass and apples; said to be bad for potatoes, making them rot; makes the fruit now ripening decay, — apples, etc.

[1] [Channing, p. 327.]

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Aug. 18. Rain again.

P. M. — To Great Fields.

Many leaves of the cultivated cherry are turned yellow, and a very *few* leaves of the elm have fallen, — the dead or prematurely ripe. The abundant and repeated rains since this month came in have made the last fortnight and more seem like a rainy season in the tropics, — warm, still copious rains falling straight down, contrasting with the cold, driving spring rains. Now again I am caught in a heavy shower in Moore's pitch pines on edge of Great Fields, and am obliged to stand crouching under my umbrella till the drops turn to streams, which find their way through my umbrella, and the path up the hillside is all afloat, a succession of puddles at different levels, each bounded by a ridge of dead pine-needles. An Irishman, getting out stumps and roots in Moore's Swamp, at first squatted behind a wood-pile, but, being wet to his skin, now stands up and moves about for warmth. Melons crack open before they are sweet. Is not that variety of the ambrosia going to seed by Brown's bars in Sleepy Hollow the *heterophylla?* [1] with short, pyramidal purplish spikes and dark-green entire lanceolate leaves above.

What means this sense of lateness that so comes over one now, — as if the rest of the year were down-hill, and if we had not performed anything before, we should not now? The season of flowers or of promise may be said to be over, and now is the season of fruits; but where is our fruit? The night of the year is approaching. What have we done with our talent? All nature

[1] No; one form of the common.

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prompts and reproves us. How early in the year it begins to be late! The sound of the crickets, even in the spring, makes our hearts beat with its awful reproof, while it encourages with its seasonable warning. It matters not by how little we have fallen behind; it seems irretrievably late. The year is full of warnings of its shortness, as is life. The sound of so many insects and the sight of so many flowers affect us so, — the creak of the cricket and the sight of the prunella and autumnal dandelion. They say, "For the night cometh in which no man may work."

Aug. 19. *Friday.* 9 A. M. — To Sudbury by boat with W. E. C.

Cooler weather. Last Sunday we were sweltering here and one hundred died of the heat in New York; to-day they have fires in this village. After more rain, with wind in the night, it is now clearing up cool. There is a broad, clear crescent of blue in the west, slowly increasing, and an agreeable autumnal coolness, both under the high, withdrawn clouds and the edges of the woods, and a considerable wind wafts us along with our one sail and two umbrellas, sitting in thick coats. I was going to sit and write or mope all day in the house, but it seems wise to cultivate animal spirits, to embark in enterprises which employ and recreate the whole body. Let the divine spirits like the huntsman with his bugle accompany the animal spirit that would fain range the forest and meadow. Even the gods and goddesses, Apollo and Diana, are found in the field, though they are superior to the dog and the deer.

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The river is full and overflowing, though there are still a few lilies and pontederias left. The wind comes from the northwest and is bracing and encouraging, and we can now sail up the stream. Flocks of bobolinks go tinkling along about the low willows, and swallows twitter, and a kingbird hovers almost stationary in the air, a foot above the water. The weeds which rise above the water now bend up-stream. The rich red *Polygonum amphibium* var. *terrestre* (?), — I suppose, for it rises sometimes two feet erect and is slightly hairy and leaves not commonly heart-shaped. Also probably the variety *aquaticum* just appearing above water in midstream, where it floats.[1] Both of these probably two or three days at most; but all weeds are wholly or partially drowned. Start up three blue herons in the meadow under Fair Haven, which fly heavily like bitterns, with their breast-bones projecting like a broad keel, — or was it their necks curled up?

Mowing in Conant's meadow by Fair Haven. These mowers must often find the bittern's eggs. On entering Fair Haven with a fair wind, scare up two ducks behind the point of the Island. Saw three or four more in the afternoon. Also I hear from over the pond the clear metallic scream of young hawks, so common at this season, probably marsh hawks. Buttercups[2] are now abundant in Lee's meadow. Is it the *repens*? The pads are mostly eaten through and through and covered with water, and I see many of their wrecks drifting down the stream, and the pontederia leaves are already

[1] Doubtful if I have yet distinguished them.

[2] Were they not fall dandelions?

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half of them turned brown and shrivelled dry, before any frosts! Why should they decay so soon, like skunk-cabbage leaves? The fall has come to them. Thistle-down is seen in the air sometimes. Epilobium down has been flying some time also.

The sun comes out now about noon, when we are at Rice's, and the water sparkles in the clear air, and the pads reflect the sun. The dog-days seem now fairly past. The lower rank of polygonums is nearly drowned, but the higher, the *hydropiperoides*, rises still a foot or two, with its white spike and its broader leaves bending south before the wind and reflecting the light. There is much trumpet-weed along the shore.

We have passed men at work in the water a foot or more deep, saving the grass they had cut, and now we enter the broader Sudbury meadows. How clear and bright the air! The stems of trees at a distance are absolutely black and the densest shades [*sic*]. We scare up blue herons here also. As many as half a dozen different blue herons in our voyage. They are the most common large bird we see. They have got the grass from not more than a third of the meadows here, for there is much more water on them than in Concord. We left men mowing in Conant's meadow, which is as wet as the average of ours, but here we sail across the meadow, cutting off the bends in the river. Many tons stand cocked up, blackened and lost, in the water, and probably (?) they will not get the grass now standing. Either their meadows are lower referred to the river, or the river has risen higher there, — I think the former.

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There are broad fields of sium with its umbels now going to seed, exactly like carrots, half a dozen rods in width along the stream, all through this meadow. The bulrushes are turning brown and falling. I see floating or just beneath the surface, along the side of the river, masses of the *Ranunculus Purshii*,[1] four or five feet through and many rods long, as if rolled together, washed up and off. The great arundo is now green with a reddish top and blades one inch wide. Methinks it is not long out of bloom.

We landed at the first cedar hills above the causeway and ate our dinner and watermelon on them. A great reddish-brown marsh hawk circling over the meadow there. How freshly, beautifully green the landscape after all these rains! The poke-berry ripe. Hear the incessant cricket of the fall now. Found a swamp full of high blueberries there, and from the hill near by looked to Nobscot, three or four miles distant. It was seen to advantage, rising green or with a glaucous tint above the slope of a near pasture which concealed all the intervening country. The great Sudbury meadows, looking north, appear elevated. Every blade and leaf has been washed by the rains, and the landscape is indescribably bright. It is light without heat, Septemberish, as if reflected from the earth, such as is common in the fall. The surface of the meadows and the whole earth is like that of a great reflector to the sun, but reflecting his light more than his heat.

It is a glorious and ever-memorable day. We observe attentively the first beautiful days in the spring, but not

[1] Is it not *Bidens Beckii*?

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so much in the autumn. We might expect that the first fair days after so much rain would be remarkable. It is a day affecting the spirits of men, but there is nobody to enjoy it but ourselves. What do the laborer ox and the laborer man care for the beautiful days? Will the haymaker when he comes home to-night know that this has been such a beautiful day? This day itself has been the great phenomenon, but will it be reported in any journal, as the storm is, and the heat? It is like a great and beautiful flower unnamed. I see a man trimming willows on the Sudbury causeway and others raking hay out of the water in the midst of all this clarity and brightness, but are they aware of the splendor of this day? The mass of mankind, who live in houses or shops, or are *bent* upon their labor out of doors, know nothing of the beautiful days which are passing about and around them. Is not such a day worthy of a hymn? It is such a day as mankind might spend in praising and glorifying nature. It might be spent as a natural sabbath, if only all men would accept the hint, devoted to unworldly thoughts. The first bright day of the fall, the earth reflector. The dog-day mists are gone; the washed earth shines; the cooler air braces man. No summer day is so beautiful as the fairest spring and fall days.

Went through a potato-field overrun and concealed by Roman wormwood as high as our heads. Returning, we row all the way. On the narrow meadow in Sudbury between Sherman's Bridge and the Jenkins Bend, opposite the oaks, found a new flower, the *Coreopsis rosea*, a small purplish or pale-red flower, somewhat

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like a mayweed at a distance, but with linear leaves; maybe a fortnight since, for some were gone to seed. It was now nearly covered with the water. The only coreopsis I have found; rose-flowered coreopsis. It interests me not a little from its resemblance to the coreopsis of the gardens.

Entered Fair Haven at sunset. A large hawk sat on the very top of a tall white pine in Lee's Wood, looking down at us. He looked like an eagle with his full breast, or like a great cone belonging to the tree. It is their habit thus to perch on the top of the pines, and they are not readily detected. I could see him nearly half a mile off.

As the rays of the sun fell horizontally across the placid pond, they lit up the side of Baker's Pleasant Meadow Wood, which covers a hill. The different shades of green of different and the same trees, — alders, pines, birch, maple, oak, etc., — melting into one another on their rounded bosky edges, made a most glorious soft and harmonious picture, only to be seen at this season of the day and perhaps of the year. It was a beautiful green rug with lighter shadings and rounded figures like the outlines of trees and shrubs of different shades of green. In the case of a single tree there was the dark glossy green of the lower, older leaves, — the spring growth, — which hang down, fading on every side into the silvery hoariness of the younger and more downy leaves on the edges, — the fall growth, — whose under sides are seen, which stand up, and more perhaps at this hour. This was also the case with every bush along the river, — the larger glossy

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dark-green watery leaves beneath and in the recesses, the upright hoary leaves whose under sides were seen on the shoots which rose above. I never saw a forest-side look more luxuriantly and at the same time freshly beautiful. These lighter shades in the rug had the effect of watered silks, — the edges lit, the breasts dark-green, almost the cast on green crops seen by moonlight.

As toward the evening of the day the lakes and streams are smooth, so in the fall, the evening of the year, the waters are smoothed more perfectly than at any other season. The day is an epitome of the year. The smaller, or green, bittern goes over. Now, while off Conantum, we have a cool, white, autumnal twilight, and as we pass the Hubbard Bridge, see the first stars.

I have already seen the cores of white pine cones stripped by the squirrels (?).

Aug. 20. P. M. — To Great Meadows.

Bidens connata (?) by pond-hole beyond Agricultural Ground; no rays yet at least. No traces of fringed gentian can I find. The liatris now in prime, — purple with a bluish reflection. A *Desmodium Canadense* (?) with large flowers spreading ascendant in the liatris hollow. Was that *Neottia* or *Spiranthes gracilis*, fifteen inches high there, without apparent leaf?

They have got nearly all the grass from the meadow. I walk down the firm bank of the river, that broad, flat firm strip between the meadow with its poor cut-grass and the stream, on which a better but wiry kind of grass grows. There is not nearly so much water here

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as in Sudbury. The river is higher than it has been since spring.

This day, too, has that autumnal character. I am struck by the clearness and stillness of the air, the brightness of the landscape, or, as it were, the reflection of light from the washed earth, the darkness and heaviness of the shade, as I look now up the river at the white maples and bushes, and the smoothness of the stream. If they are between you and the sun, the trees are more black than green. It must be owing to the clearness of the air since the rains, together with the multiplication of the leaves, whose effect has not been perceived during the mists of the dog-days. But I cannot account for this peculiar smoothness of the dimpled stream — unless the air is stiller than before — nor for the peculiar brightness of the sun's reflection from its surface. I stand on the south bank, opposite the black willows, looking up the full stream, which, with a smooth, almost oily and sheeny surface, comes welling and dimpling onward, peculiarly smooth and bright now at 4 P. M., while the numerous trees seen up the stream — white maples, oaks, etc. — and the bushes look absolutely black in the clear, bright light.

Aug. 21. 6 A. M. — To Island by boat.

Aster macrophyllus. Appear not to blossom generally this year.

P. M. — To Jenny Dugan's and Conantum.

Saw one of those light-green locusts about three quarters of an inch long on a currant leaf in the garden. It kept up a steady shrilling (unlike the interrupted

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creak of the cricket), with its wings upright on its shoulders, all indistinct, they moved so fast. Near at hand it made my ears ache, it was so piercing, and was accompanied by a hum like that of a factory. The wings are transparent, with marks somewhat like a letter.

That which I had mistaken for *Mentha Canadensis* at Mrs. Hosmer's brook is apparently *M. piperita*, or peppermint, naturalized. It *may* have been in bloom a fortnight. It is higher-scented, with dark leaves and dark-purplish stems, and a short spike of flowers above, and not in the axils of the leaves. What I take to be *Aster patens* is a handsome light-blue aster, now abundant on the hillside by J. Hosmer's pines. The choke-cherries, which are now, and have been for some time, as ripe as they will be, actually fur the mouth, and the juice of these taken into the mouth, mixed with the saliva, is feathered like tea into which sour cream has been poured. They are a rich, fatty-looking fruit. That must be the *Aster puniceus* (which I have falsely called *longifolius*), four or five feet high and coarse and rough, commonly with a reddish stem, filling the brook behind Dugan's; out two or three days, very *pale* purplish. I see aphides like a white mildew on the alders. The *Polygonum articulatum* not yet. The *Aster lævis* is one of the most beautiful I have seen yet, especially when there are ten or twelve in a panicle, making a small rounded bunch. The *Viburnum Lentago* berries are but just *beginning* to redden on one cheek. The *Cornus paniculata* are fairly white in some places. The polygonatum berries have been a bluish-green some time. Do they turn still?

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Methinks I have not heard a robin sing morning or evening of late, but the peawai still, and occasionally a short note from the gold robin.

The river was as low as in July, last year at this time. It is now *perhaps* two feet higher than then. The river plants are thus subject to unusual accidents. I think it was lowest this year the latter part of July before the rains.

An aster beyond Hubbard's Grove which I should call *A. Radula*, but the calyx-scales not appressed.

Aug. 22. Monday. P. M. — Up Assabet to Yellow Rocket Shore.

A still afternoon with a prospect of a shower in the west. The immediate edge of the river is for the most part respected by the mowers, and many wild plants there escape from year to year, being too coarse for hay. The prevailing flowers now along the river are the mikania, polygonums, trumpet-weed, cardinal, arrow-head, *Chelone glabra*, and here and there vernonia. The button-bush is out of bloom and its balls browning. On the steep hillside where the Leaning Hemlocks grow slanted over the river and from year to year falling into it, I am surprised to see that many are leaning and falling up the hill, owing to a slide which has carried their roots forward toward the water. I hear the muttering of thunder and the first drops dimple the river.

I hear but few notes of birds these days; no singing, but merely a few hurried notes or screams or twittering or peeping. I will enumerate such as I hear or see this still louring and showery afternoon. A hurried anxious

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note from a robin. Heard perhaps half a dozen afterward. They flit now, accompanied by their young. A sharp, loud *che-wink* from a ground-robin. A goldfinch twitters over; several more heard afterward. A blue jay screams, and one or two fly over, showing to advantage their handsome forms, especially their regular tails, wedge-formed. Surprised to hear a very faint *bobolink* in the air; the *link, link*, once or twice later. A yellow-bird flew over the river. Swallows twittering, but flying high, — the chimney swallows and what I take to be the bank ditto. Scared up a green bittern from an oak by the riverside. Hear a peawai whose note is more like singing — as if it were still incubating — than any other. Some of the warble of the golden robin. A king-fisher, with his white collar, darted across the river and alighted on an oak. A peetweet flew along the shore and uttered its peculiar note. Their wings appear double as they fly by you, while their bill is cumbrously carried pointing downward in front. The chipping of a song sparrow occasionally heard amid the bushes. A single duck scared up. And two nighthawks flying high over the river. At twilight many bats after the showers. These birds were heard or seen in the course of three or four hours on the river, but there were not sounds enough to disturb the general stillness.

The scarlet thorn berry has been turning some time and is now edible, — an oblong squarish fruit, scarlet with yellowish specks or spaces. The black willow has already lost some of its freshness and greenness, as if burnt; it is a little yellow or brownish. It is a tree apparently without stem, light masses of foliage resting on

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the water, and is badly named black willow except as descriptive of its winter and spring appearance, being one of the most buoyant and ethereal of trees.

Methinks I have seen thus far this year only the *Polygonum amphibium* var. *terrestre*. The species is not abundant, but is very interesting to me, occurring at this later cooler and darker season. There is one rarely dense bed of them in the Assabet just beyond the rock by Hosmer's bound. The smooth green leaves are surmounted by very dense rich rose-red — or a very dark shade of pink — spikes three inches or more in length, six inches to two and a half feet from the water. This little red streak is detected afar. Methinks it is the handsomest of our indigenous polygonums.

The scream of young marsh hawks sounds like some notes of the jay.

Aug. 23. 6 A. M. — To Nawshawtuct.

A very clear but cool morning, all white light. The feverwort berries are yellowing and yellowed; barberries have begun to redden, and the prinos, — some of the last quite red. The *Spiranthes gracilis*, with its leafless stalk, is very common now on grassy hillsides.

August has been thus far dog-days, rain, oppressive sultry heat, and now beginning fall weather.

P. M. — Clematis Brook *via* Conantum.

Neottia or rather *Spiranthes cernua*, a few days, bank by Hubbard's meadow, by oak beyond ivy pass. This low, with long lanceolate leaves, and in low ground compared with the taller *gracilis*. More and larger by

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meadow path beyond swimming-place. Have we the *latifolia?* The *gracilis* has its crystalline white flowers arranged in a dense spiral cone like the thread of a screw, standing out nearly at right angles with the stem, curved downward a little.

Squirrels have commenced on hazelnuts.

Observing the blackness of the foliage, especially between me and the light, I am reminded that it begins in the spring, the dewy dawn of the year, with a silvery hoary downiness, changing to a yellowish or light green, — the saffron-robed morn, — then to a pure, spotless, glossy green with light under sides reflecting the light, — the forenoon, — and now the dark green, or early afternoon, when shadows begin to increase, and next it will turn yellow or red, — the sunset sky, — and finally sere brown and black, when the night of the year sets in.

Carrion-berries just begin to be ripe. Potato-fields are full of Roman wormwood now. I am braced and encouraged by the rank growth of this aromatic plant, concealing the potato vines which are already nearly half decayed. By path from meadow through Hubbard's rear wood and sprout-lands. The now purple naked viburnum berries — numerous drooping cymes of purple berries — are now very handsome seen against the green leaves in sprout-lands. I see to-day — and may add to yesterday's list — the blue heron launch off from an oak by the river and flap or sail away with lumbering flight; also kingbirds and crows. The red-eye may be heard *faintly* in the morning.

The *Solidago nemoralis* now yellows the dry fields

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with its recurved standard a little more than a foot high, — marching to the Holy Land, a countless host of crusaders. That field in the woods near Well Meadow, where I once thought of squatting, is full of them. The patches of rhexia or meadow-beauty which have escaped the mowers in the low grounds, where rowen is now coming forward apace, look like a little bright purple on one side of Nature's pallet, giving place to some fresh green which Nature has ground. The traveller leaves his dog to worry the woodchuck, though he himself passes on, so little advanced has man from the savage state. Anon he will go back to save him, and legislatures perchance will pass laws for his protection. Arum berries. *Smilacina racemosa* [berries] now are reddish and minutely red speckled; its leaves are commonly eaten or decayed. The *Smilacina bifolia* in some places red. Of late I notice that saw-like grass gone to seed, — a flattened row of seeds two or three inches long under a flat, leaf-like stalk, — an autumnal sight.

Pickering, in his "Races," suggests that savages, going naked, do not disperse seeds so much as civilized men. Beggar-ticks and burs (I say) do not adhere to the bare skin. Weeds especially accompany civilization. I hesitated to collect some desmodium seeds because they looked green and the plant was still in flower, but before I had gone far I found [I] had brought away many on my clothes, which suggested to me that probably as soon as the hooked hairs were stiff enough, clinging to foreign surfaces, to overcome the adherence of the pods to their stems, it will do to pluck them for seed.

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I am again struck by the perfect correspondence of a day — say an August day — and the year. I think that a perfect parallel may be drawn between the seasons of the day and of the year. Perhaps after middle age man ceases to be interested in the morning and in the spring.

I see the late flowers of the cistus again!

Poke stems are now ripe. I walked through a beautiful grove of them, six or seven feet high, on the side of Lee's Cliff, where they have ripened early. Their stems are a deep, rich purple with a bloom, contrasting with the clear green leaves. Every part but the leaves is a brilliant purple (lake (?)-purple); or, more strictly speaking, the racemes without the berries are a brilliant lake-red with crimson flame-like reflections. Hence the *lacca*. Its cylindrical racemes of berries of various hues from green to dark purple, six or seven inches long, are drooping on all sides, beautiful both with and without berries, all afire with ripeness. Its stalks, thus full of purple wine, are one of the fruits of autumn. It excites me to behold it. What a success is its! What maturity it arrives [at], ripening from leaf to root! May I mature as perfectly, root and branch, as the poke! Its stems are more beautiful than most flowers. It is the emblem of a successful life, a not premature death, — whose death is an ornament to nature. To walk amid these upright branching casks of purple wine, which retain and diffuse a sunset glow, for nature's vintage is not confined to the vine! I drink it with my eyes. Our poets have sung wine, the product of a foreign plant which they never saw, as if our own plants

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had no juice in them more than our poets. Here are berries enough to paint the western sky with and play the Bacchanal if you will. What flutes its ensanguined stems would make, to be used in the dance! It is a royal plant. I could spend the evening of the year musing amid the poke stems.[1]

Live in each season as it passes; breathe the air, drink the drink, taste the fruit, and resign yourself to the influences of each. Let them be your only diet drink and botanical medicines. In August live on berries, not dried meats and pemmican, as if you were on shipboard making your way through a waste ocean, or in a northern desert. Be blown on by all the winds. Open all your pores and bathe in all the tides of Nature, in all her streams and oceans, at all seasons. Miasma and infection are from within, not without. The invalid, brought to the brink of the grave by an unnatural life, instead of imbibing only the great influence that Nature is, drinks only the tea made of a particular herb, while he still continues his unnatural life, — saves at the spile and wastes at the bung. He does not love Nature or his life, and so sickens and dies, and no doctor can cure him. Grow green with spring, yellow and ripe with autumn. Drink of each season's influence as a vial, a true panacea of all remedies mixed for your especial use. The vials of summer never made a man sick, but those which he stored in his cellar. Drink the wines, not of your bottling, but Nature's bottling; not kept in goat-skins or pig-skins, but the skins of a myriad

[1] [*Excursions*, pp. 254, 255; Riv. 311–313. See also *Journal*, vol. ii, pp. 489, 490.]

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fair berries. Let Nature do your bottling and your pickling and preserving. For all Nature is doing her best each moment to make us well. She exists for no other end. Do not resist her. With the least inclination to be well, we should not be sick. Men have discovered — or think they have discovered — the salutariness of a few wild things only, and not of all nature. Why, "nature" is but another name for health, and the seasons are but different states of health. Some men think that they are not well in spring, or summer, or autumn, or winter; it is only because they are not *well in* them.[1]

How handsome now the cymes of *Viburnum Lentago* berries, flattish with red cheeks! The great bidens is only partially out, by the side of the brook that comes out of Deacon Farrar's Swamp and runs under the causeway east of the Corner Bridge. The flowers are all turned toward the westering sun and are two to two and a half or more inches in diameter, like sunflowers, hieroglyphics of the seasons, only to be read by the priests of Nature. I go there as to one of autumn's favorite haunts. Most poems, like the fruits, are sweetest toward the blossom end. The milkweed leaves are already yellowing. The clematis is most interesting in its present feathery state, — light, silvery, shining green. A solidago some time out, say a week, on side of Mt. Misery, like the *S. alta*, but smooth-stemmed and commonly dark-purplish. Call it *ulmifolia* for the present, though the leaves are not so broad as the elm nearly and it is not there in low ground. Looking

[1] [See *Walden*, pp. 153, 154; Riv. 216, 217.]

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down the river valley now from Mt. Misery, an hour before sundown, I am struck with nothing so much as the autumnal coolness of the landscape and the predominance of shade. The pale yellowish-green side-saddle-flower, probably the var. *heterophylla*, is common enough in our meadows. A sweet-william pink at bottom of Wheildon's field. I find the pods of the amphicarpæa at last. It may have blossomed three weeks ago.

Aug. 24. Another cool, autumn-like morning, also quite foggy. Rains a little in the forenoon and cloudy the rest of the day.

P. M. — To Saw Mill Brook *via* Trillium Woods.

A cool breeze blows this cloudy afternoon, and I wear a thicker coat.

The mulgedium by railroad is seven feet high, with great panicles of a regular, somewhat elliptic-lanceolate (?) form, two and a half feet long by ten inches. The *Prinos lævigatus* berries begin to redden. The farmers are beginning to clear out their ditches now.

Blue-stemmed goldenrod, apparently a few days in some places. The goldenrods which I have observed in bloom this year are (I do not remember the order exactly): (1) *stricta*, (2) *lanceolata*, (3) *arguta* (?), (4) *nemoralis*, (5) *bicolor*, (6) *odora*, (7) *altissima*, (8) *ulmifolia* (?), (9) *cæsia*. The 4th is the prevailing one and much the most abundant now. The 1st perhaps next, though it may be getting old. The *altissima* (7th) certainly next. It is just beginning to be abundant. Its tops a foot or more broad, with numerous recurved racemes on every

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side, with yellow and yellowing triangular points. It is the most conspicuous of all. The *bicolor* (5th) next, though not conspicuous. The 3d, 8th, 2d, and 6th perhaps never abundant. The *cæsia* (9th) just begun.

The asters and diplopappi are about in this order: (1) *Radula*, (2) *D. cornifolius* (?), (3) *A. corymbosus*,[1] (4) *patens*, (5) *lævis*, (6) *dumosus* (?), (7) *miser*, (8) *macrophyllus*, (9) *D. umbellatus*, (10) *A. acuminatus*, (11) *puniceus*. The *patens* (4), of various forms, *some* lilac, is the prevailing blue or bluish one now, middle-sized and very abundant on dry hillsides and by wood-paths; the *lævis* next. The 1st, or *Radula*, is not abundant. (These three are all the distinctly blue ones yet.) The *dumosus* is the prevailing white one, very abundant; *miser* mixed with it. *D. umbellatus* is conspicuous enough in some places (low grounds), and *A. puniceus* beginning to be so. But *D. cornifolius*, *A. corymbosus*, *macrophyllus*, and *acuminatus* are confined to particular localities. *Dumosus* and *patens* (and perhaps *lævis*, not common enough) are the prevailing asters now.

The common large osmunda (?) is already considerably imbrowned, but the odorous dicksonia (?), which, like most ferns, blossoms later, is quite fresh. This thin, flat, beautiful fern it is which I see green under the snow.[2] I am inclined to call it the lace fern. (Peaches fairly begun.) It is a triangular web of fine lace-work surpassing all the works of art.

Solidago latifolia not yet. I see roundish silvery slate-colored spots, surrounded by a light ring, near the base of the leaves of an aster (*miser* ?), one beneath

[1] Or *cordifolius*.

[2] [A mistake. See *postea*.]

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another like the dropping of a bird, or as if some tincture had fallen from above. Some of the leaves of the *A. patens* are red. The alternate cornel berries, which are particularly apt to drop off early, are a dark, dull blue, not china-like. I see those of maple-leaved viburnum merely yellowish now. There grows by Saw Mill Brook a long firmer, thimble-shaped high blackberry with small grains, with more green ones still on it, which I think like the New Hampshire kind. I see some black and some greenish light slate-colored fungi. This certainly is the season for fungi. I see on the shrub oaks now caterpillars an inch and a half or more long, black with yellowish stripes, lying along the petioles, — thick living petioles. They have stripped off the leaves, leaving the acorns bare. The *Ambrina* (*Chenopodium*, Bigelow) *Botrys*, Jerusalem-oak, a worm-seed, by R. W. E.'s heater piece. The whole plant is densely branched — branches spike-like — and appears full of seed. Has a pleasant, more distinct wormwood-like odor. In a dry sprout-land (Ministerial Lot), what I will call *Solidago puberula*[1] will open in a day or two, — upright and similar to *stricta* in leaves, with a purple stem and smooth leaves, entire above, and a regular oblong appressed panicle. *Bidens chrysanthemoides*, of a small size and earlier, by Turnpike, now in prime there. I see cattle coming down from up-country. Why? Yellow Bethlehem-star still. *A. miser* (?), with purplish disk and elliptic-lanceolate leaves, serrate in middle, may be as early as *dumosus*.

[1] *Vide* Sept. 1st.

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Aug. 25. Warmer to-day. Surveying Tuttle's farm. From the extreme eastern side of his farm, looking up the valley of the Mill Brook, in which direction it is about two miles to anything that can be called high ground (say at E. Wood's), I was surprised to see the whole outline and greater part of the base of Wachusett, though you stand in a low meadow. It is because of the great distance of the hills westward. It is a fuller view of this mountain than many of our hills afford. Seen through this lower stratum, the mountain is a very dark blue.

I am struck by the rank growth of weeds at this season. Passing over Tuttle's farm, only one field removed from the Turnpike, where various kinds of tall, rank weeds are rampant, half concealing the lusty crops, — low ground which has only been cultivated twice before, where turnips and algæ (?) contend for places, fire-weeds (senecio), thoroughwort, *Eupatorium purpureum*, and giant asters, etc., suggest a vigor in the soil, an Ohio fertility, which I was not prepared for, which on the sandy turnpike I had not suspected, — it seemed to me that I had not enough frequented and considered the products, perchance, of these fertile grounds which the farmers have enriched. He is continually selecting a virgin soil and adding the contents of his barn-yards to it.

Aug. 26. The fall dandelion is as conspicuous and abundant now in Tuttle's meadow as buttercups in the spring. It takes their place. Saw the comet in the west to-night. It made me think of those imperfect

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white seeds in a watermelon, — an immature, ineffectual meteor.

Aug. 27. *Saturday.* P. M. — To Walden.

Topping corn now reveals the yellowing pumpkins. Dangle-berries very large in shady copses now; seem to love wet weather; have lost their bloom. *Aster undulatus.* The decurrent gnaphalium has not long shown yellow. Perhaps I made it blossom a little too early.

September is at hand; the first month (after the summer heat) with a *burr* to it, month of early frosts; but December will be tenfold rougher. January relents for a season at the time of its thaw, and hence that liquid *r* in its name.

Aug. 28. *Sunday.* P. M. — To Cliffs.

See many sparrows in *flocks* with a white feather in tail! The smooth sumach leaves are fast reddening. The berries of the dwarf sumach are not a brilliant crimson, but as yet, at least, a *dull* sort of dusty or mealy crimson. As they are later, so their leaves are more fresh and green than those of the smooth species. The acorns show now on the shrub oaks. A cool, white, autumnal evening.

Aug. 29. The 25th and 26th I was surveying Tuttle's farm. The northeast side bounds on the Mill Brook and its tributary and is very irregular. I find, after surveying accurately the windings of several brooks and of the river, that their meanders are not such regular serpentine

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curves as is commonly supposed, or at least represented. They flow as much in a zigzag as serpentine manner. The eye is very much deceived when standing on the brink, and one who had only surveyed a brook so would be inclined to draw a succession of pretty regular serpentine curves. But, accurately plotted, the regularity disappears, and there are found to be many straight lines and sharp turns. I want no better proof of the inaccuracy of some maps than the regular curving meanders of the streams, made evidently by a sweep of the pen. No, the Meander no doubt flowed in a very crooked channel, but depend upon it, it was as much zigzag as serpentine. This last brook I observed was doubly zigzag, or compoundly zigzag; *i. e.*, there was a zigzag on a large scale including the lesser. To the eye this meadow is perfectly level. Probably all streams are (generally speaking) far more meandering in low and level and soft ground near their mouths, where they flow slowly, than in high and rugged ground which offers more obstacles. The meadow being so level for long distances, no doubt as high in one direction as another, how, I asked myself, did the feeble brook, with all its meandering, ever find its way to the distant lower end? What kind of instinct conducted it forward in the right direction? How unless it is the relict of a lake which once stood high over all these banks, and knew the different levels of its distant shores? How unless a flow which commenced above its level first wore its channel for it? Thus, in regard to most rivers, did not lakes first find their mouths for them, just as the tide now keeps open the mouths of

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sluggish rivers? And who knows to what extent the sea originally channelled the submerged globe?

Walking down the street in the evening, I detect my neighbor's ripening grapes by the scent twenty rods off; though they are concealed behind his house, every passer knows of them. So, too, ever and anon I pass through a little region possessed by the fragrance of ripe apples.

Aug. 30. *Tuesday.* In low ground by Turnpike, a tall aster, *A. longifolius* (?), a day or two perhaps (*salicifolius* of Bigelow).[1] Saw some by river in the afternoon with sharply serrate leaves. I think that the very small and dense-flowered white or whitish aster by roadsides and riversides, with pointed scales and disk turning purplish-brown, with very many flowers on the sides of the branches or branchlets, must be *A. Tradescanti*, sometimes quite high. I have thus far confounded it with what I have called the *dumosus*, and am not sure which is the earliest. The latter has larger flowers, not so crowded, one at the end of each branchlet, and the scales more abruptly pointed.

11 A. M. — Up river to Fair Haven.

River one or two feet higher than in July. A very little wind from the south or southwest, but the water quite smooth at first. The river foliage is slightly crisped and imbrowned; I mean the black willows, button-bushes, and polygonums. The pads are for the most part eaten, decayed, and wasted away, — the white last the longest, — and the pontederias are already

[1] Abundant in Moore's Swamp, Aug. 31st.

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mostly dry and blackened. Only three or four white lilies and pontederia blossoms left. The *Polygonum hydropiperoides* and the narrow-leaved and mikania are the prevailing conspicuous flowers. Others are the trumpet-weed, yellow lilies (*Kalmiana* drowned), cardinals (rather scarce), whorled utricularia, one purple one, *Polygonum amphibium*, etc. Bathed at Hubbard's Bend. The water now cold and bracing, for it has contrived to rain more or less all the month. Men raking cranberries in the meadows. Ivy berries are crisped and whitish on the rock at Bittern Cliff. The polygonatum berries are green with a bluish bloom. *Polygonum dumetorum*, apparently not long, very abundant in Tarbell's cleared swamp by roadside, also by Peter's Path, running up a tree eight or nine feet at this Cliff. Some of the river cornel berries are almost clear white on one side, the other china-blue. These and the *Viburnum Lentago* berries are now common and handsome.

The *Solidago odora* grows abundantly behind the Minott house in Lincoln. I collected a large bundle of it. Its flower is stale for the most part and imbrowned. It grows in such thick tufts that you can easily gather it. Some haws are now edible. Grapes are already ripe; I smelled them first. As I went along from the Minott house to the Bidens Brook, I was quite bewildered by the beauty and variety of the asters, now in their prime there, — *A. lævis* (large and handsome with various leaves), *patens*, *linariifolius*, etc. The bidens has not yet reached its greatest profusion. Why so many asters and goldenrods now? The sun has shone on the

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earth, and the goldenrod is his fruit. The stars, too, have shone on it, and the asters are their fruit.

The purple balls of the carrion-flower, now open a little beneath, standing out on all sides six or eight inches from the twining stem, are very handsome. They are covered with a blue bloom, and when this is rubbed off by leaves, are a shining blackish.

Set sail homeward about an hour before sundown. The breeze blows me glibly across Fair Haven, the last dying gale of the day. No wonder men love to be sailors, to be blown about the world sitting at the helm, to shave the capes and see the islands disappear under their sterns, — gubernators to a piece of wood. It disposes to contemplation, and is to me instead of smoking.

Saw an *Aster undulatus* (?) with a very densely [?] flowered and branched top, small, pale purple. What is the *Solidago* like an *altissima* but a simple raceme and leaves much less cut? [1] It is as early as *S. altissima*. *Galium circæzans*, the broad-leaved, is now in fruit.

Nature made a highway from southwest to northeast through this town (not to say county), broad and beautiful, which attracted Indians to dwell upon it and settlers from England at last, ten rods wide and bordered by the most fertile soil in the town, a tract most abounding in vegetable and in animal life; yet, though it passes through the centre of the town, I have been upon it the livelong day and have not met a traveller. Out of twenty-odd hundred dwellers near its banks, not one has used this highway to-day for a distance of four miles at least.

[1] Probably a variety of same?

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I find at this time in fruit: (1) *Polypodium vulgare*, (2) *Struthiopteris Germanica* (ostrich fern), (3) *Pteris aquilina* (common brake) (have not looked for fruit), (4) *Adiantum pedatum* (have not looked for fruit), (5) *Asplenium Trichomanes* (dwarf spleenwort), also (6) *A. ebeneum* (ebony spleenwort), (7) *Dicksonia punctilobula*, (8) *Dryopteris marginalis* (marginal shield fern), (9) *Polystichum acrostichoides* (terminal shield fern), (10) *Onoclea sensibilis* (?) (sensitive fern) (think I saw the fruit August 12th at Bittern Cliff), (11) *Lygodium palmatum* (probably still in fruit, was when I last saw it), (12) *Osmunda spectabilis* (flowering fern) (out of fruit), (13) *Osmunda cinnamomea* (?) (tall osmunda) (also out of fruit). Nos. 1, 5, 6, and 8 common at Lee's Cliff. No. 2 behind Trillium Woods, 4 at Miles Swamp, 9 at Brister's Hill. The dwarf spleenwort grows in the sharp angles of the rocks in the side of Lee's Cliff, its small fronds spreading in curved rays, its matted roots coming away in triangular masses, moulded by the rock. The ebony spleenwort stands upright against the rocks.

Aug. 31. P. M. — To Moore's Swamp.

Bidens cernua well out, the flowering one. The asters and goldenrods are now in their prime, I think. The rank growth of flowers (commonly called weeds) in this swamp now impresses me like a harvest of flowers. I am surprised at their luxuriance and profusion. The *Solidago altissima* is now the prevailing one, *i. e.* goldenrod, in low grounds where the swamp has been cleared. It occupies acres, densely rising as high as your head, with the great white umbel-like tops of the *Diplopappus*

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umbellatus rising above it. There are also intermixed *Solidago stricta*, erechthites (fire-weed), *Aster puniceus* and *longifolius*, *Galium asprellum* in great beds, thoroughwort, trumpet-weed, *Polygonum Hydropiper*, *Epilobium molle*, etc., etc. There has been no such rank flowering up to this. One would think that all the poison that is in the earth and air must be extracted out of them by this rank vegetation. The ground is quite mildewy, it is so shaded by them, cellar-like.

Raspberries still fresh. I see the first dogwood turned scarlet in the swamp. Great black cymes of elderberries now bend down the bushes. Saw a great black spider an inch long, with each of his legs an inch and three quarters long, on the outside of a balloon-shaped web, within which were young and a great bag. *Viola pedata* out again. Leaves of *Hypericum mutilum* red about water. *Cirsium muticum*, in Moore's Swamp behind Indian field, going out of flower; *perhaps* out three weeks. Is that very dense-flowered small white aster with short branched racemes *A. Tradescanti?*—now begun to be conspicuous. A low aster by Brown's Ditch north of Sleepy Hollow like a *Radula*, but with narrower leaves and more numerous, and scales without herbaceous tips. An orange-colored fungus.

Baird, in Patent Office Report, says, "In all deer, except, perhaps, the reindeer, if the male be castrated when the horns are in a state of perfection, these will never be shed; if the operation be performed when the head is bare, they will never be reproduced; and if done when the secretion is going on, a stunted, ill-formed, permanent horn is the result."

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VII

SEPTEMBER, 1853

(ÆT. 36)

Sept. 1. *Thursday.* P. M. — To Dugan Desert and Ministerial Swamp.

The character of the past month, as I remember, has been, at first, very thick and sultry, dogdayish, the height of summer, and throughout very rainy, followed by crops of toadstools, and latterly, after the dog-days and most copious of the rains, autumnal, somewhat cooler, with signs of decaying or ripening foliage. The month of green corn and melons and plums and the earliest apples, — and now peaches, — of rank weeds. As July, perchance, has its spring side, so August has its autumnal side.

Was that the cackling of hens I heard, or the clicking of a very distant hand-organ?

Methinks the silvery cinquefoil is of late much more abundant. Is there any cessation to it? The green-briar berries begin to turn. Some large maples along the river are beginning to redden. I observe the stillness of the air and the smoothness of the water of late. The *Hieracium Canadense* is, methinks, the largest and handsomest flower of its genus, large as the fall dandelion; the *paniculatum* the most delicate. To-day and yesterday quite warm, or hot, again.

I am struck again and again by the richness of the

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meadow-beauty lingering, though it will last some time, in little dense purple patches by the sides of the meadows. It is so low it escapes the scythe. It is not so much distinct flowers (it is so low and dense), but a colored patch on the meadow. Yet how few observe it! How, in one sense, it is wasted! How little thought the mower or the cranberry-raker bestows on it! How few girls or boys come to see it!

That small aster which I call *A. Tradescanti*, with crowded racemes, somewhat rolled or cylindrical to appearance, of small white flowers a third of an inch in diameter, with yellow disks turning reddish or purplish, is very pretty by the low roadsides, resounding with the hum of honey-bees; which is commonly despised for its smallness and commonness, — with crowded systems of little suns. The *Polygonum articulatum*, apparently not for some time yet. The large epilobium still plenty in flower in Tarbell's cleared swamp. Hazel bushes are now browned or yellowed along wall-sides in pastures; blackberry vines also are reddening. The *Solidago nemoralis* has commonly a long, sharply triangular head of small crowded flowers, evenly convex and often, if not commonly, recurved through a quarter of a circle, very handsome, solid-looking, recurved golden spear-heads. But frequently it is more erect and branched. What is that alga-like plant covering the ground in Tarbell's Swamp where lately burnt over, with close mats a rod in diameter, with fruit now two or three inches high, star-like, and little cups on the green thallus?[1] I see now puffballs, now

[1] *Marchantia polymorpha.*

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four inches through, turned dark from white, and ripe, fill the air with dust four or five feet high when I kick them. Saw a red squirrel cutting off white pine cones. He had strewn the ground with them, as yet untouched, under the tree. He has a *chirrup* exactly like a partridge. Have made out *Aster multiflorus* by roadside beyond Badger house; probably not long out. It is distinguished by its hoariness, and its large herbaceous spreading calyx-tips and its crowded, somewhat rigid linear leaves, not tapering at base, low with a stout stem. A solidago by Marlborough road (*S. puberula?* or *neglecta?*), *stricta*-like, but panicle upright with short erectish racemes and lower leaves serrate, and five or six inches long; not long out. Should think it *stricta* if not for form of head; more like *puberula*, though this an imperfect one, in press.[1] I think my white daisy, which is still quite fresh in some places, must be *Erigeron strigosus*, for the hairs are minute and appressed, though the rays are not twice as long as the calyx-scales. I have seen no purplish ones since spring. *Aster undulatus* begins to be common. Johnswort, the large and common, is about done. That is the common polypody whose single fronds, six or eight inches long, stand thick in moss on the shelving rock at the Island.

The river nowadays is a permanent mirror stretching without end through the meadows, and unfailingly when I look out my window across the dusty road, I see it at a distance with the herbage of its brink reflected in it. There it lies, a mirror uncracked, unsoiled.

[1] *Vide* Aug. 24th and Sept. 11th.

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Plants or weeds very widely dispersed over the globe command a certain respect, like *Sonchus oleraceus*, Oregon, New Zealand, Peru, Patagonia, etc.; *Sicyos angulatus*, New Zealand, Australia, Hawaiian Islands, etc.; *Polygonum aviculare*, *Chenopodium album*, and *Polygonum Persicaria*, Oregon and Egypt; also many others, according to Pickering.

Pickering says that "the missionaries [at the Hawaiian Islands][1] regarded as one main obstacle to improvement the extremely limited views of the natives in respect to style of living; 'a little fish and a little poi, and they were content.'" But this is putting the cart before the horse, the real obstacle being their limited views in respect to the object of living. A philosopher has equally limited views in their sense, but then he is not content with material comforts, nor is it, perhaps, quite necessary that he first be glutted with them in order to become wise. "A native, I was assured, 'could be supported for less than two cents a day.'" (They had adopted the use of coin.)

The savage lives simply through ignorance and idleness or laziness, but the philosopher lives simply through wisdom. In the case of the savage, the accompaniment of simplicity is idleness with its attendant vices, but in the case of the philosopher, it is the highest employment and development. The fact for the savage, and for the mass of mankind, is that it is better to plant, weave, and build than do nothing or worse; but the fact for the philosopher, or a nation

[1] [The bracketed portion is Thoreau's.]

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loving wisdom, is that it is most important to cultivate the highest faculties and spend as little time as possible in planting, weaving, building, etc. It depends upon the height of your standard, and no doubt through manual labor as a police men are educated up to a certain level. The simple style is bad for the savage because he does worse than to obtain the luxuries of life; it is good for the philosopher because he does better than to work for them. The question is whether you can bear freedom. At present the vast majority of men, whether black or white, require the discipline of labor which enslaves them for their good. If the Irishman did not shovel all day, he would get drunk and quarrel. But the philosopher does not require the same discipline; if he shovelled all day, we should receive no elevating suggestions from him.

What a literary fame is that of Æsop, — an Æsopian fame! Pickering says: "A little to the west of Celebes, the literature of the Malay nation contains a translation of the Fables of Æsop; who, according to the unsatisfactory accounts we have of him, was one of the earliest of the Greek writers. And further, the fact may be noted, that the Æsopian style of composition is still in vogue at Madagascar. (See Ellis's Madagascar.)" A fame on its way round eastward with the Malay race to this western continent! A fame that travels round the world from west to east. P. gives California to the Malay race!

There are two kinds of simplicity, — one that is akin to foolishness, the other to wisdom. The philosopher's style of living is only outwardly simple, but inwardly

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complex. The savage's style is both outwardly and inwardly simple. A simpleton can perform many mechanical labors, but is not capable of profound thought. It was their limited view, not in respect to *style*, but to the *object* of living. A man who has equally limited views with respect to the end of living will not be helped by the most complex and refined style of living. It is not the tub that makes Diogenes, the Jove-born, but Diogenes the tub.

Sept. 2. P. M. — Collected and brought home in a pail of water this afternoon the following asters and diplopappi, going by Turnpike and Hubbard's Close to Saw Mill Brook, and returning by Goose Pond: (1) *A. Tradescanti*, now well under way, most densely flowered, by low roadsides; (2) *dumosus*, perhaps the most prevalent of the small whitish ones, especially in wood-paths; (3) *Diplopappus linariifolius*, quite common; (4) *A. patens*, at present by far the most common of the decidedly purple asters, in dry ground; (5) *undulatus*, just begun to be common; (6) *acuminatus*, low whorl, leafy, under a shady copse, where it appears to have been rayless, scarce; (7) *longifolius*, within a few days quite common in low ground; and (8) *puniceus*, very common in like places for a good while; (9) *Radula*, now rather pale and stale in low grounds; (10) *miser*, not as yet widely dispersed, but common in Saw Mill Brook Path; (11) *Diplopappus umbellatus*, abundant in low grounds; (12) *lævis*, I did not chance to see in this walk, but found it common the next morning, on hillside by Moore's Swamp. These

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twelve are all I know excepting *corymbosus* [1] in Miles Swamp and elsewhere, long time, not common; also *macrophyllus*, long since, not blooming this year; *multiflorus*, in dry roadsides, not yet (at least) common; and *Diplopappus cornifolius*, Bittern Cliff woods, probably out of bloom.

These twelve placed side by side, Sophia and I decided that, regarding only individual flowers, the handsomest was —

1st, *A. patens*, deep bluish-purple ("deep blue-purple" are Gray's very words), large!

2d, *lævis*, bright lilac-purple, large.

3d, perhaps *Radula*, pale bluish-purple, turning white, large!

4th, 5th, 6th. We could not easily decide between the next three, *viz.*: —

D. linariifolius, pale bluish-purple [2]
A. puniceus, purplish-pink
and *A. longifolius*, pale purple
} some large.

But we thought afterward that perhaps the *puniceus* should take precedence of the other two.

7th, *undulatus*, pale pinkish-purple, middle size.

8th, 9th, and 10th,

dumosus, white or bluish, small;
Tradescanti, white, very small;
miser, white, very small;
and I may add *multiflorus*, white (which we had not).

11th, *Diplopappus umbellatus*, white, middle size.

[1] *Cordifolius?*

[2] Some, outdoors, have a lilac or violet tint.

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12th. The *A. acuminatus* was without rays, rather large when present.

The first (*patens*) has broader rays than the second, paler within toward the large handsome yellow disk. Its rough leaves are not so handsome.

The *lævis* is more open and slender-rayed than the last, with a rather smaller disk, but, including its stem and leaves, it is altogether the most delicate and graceful, and I should incline to put it before the last.

The *Radula* has a large, coarse disk, turning brown, and at present is inclined to turn a dirty white. Its leaves are not handsome; sometimes double-rayed. Perhaps I should put this after the next two.

The *puniceus* is a very large bush full of flowers, great rounded masses, two or more feet in diameter, the very pretty pink flowers well relieved by the background of its dark-green leaves. A branch of it will, perhaps, make the greatest show of any of them at present. It has slender, rather open rays and grows upon me. It is peculiar for its color. Perhaps commonly more purplish and larger.

The *longifolius* is very densely rayed; rays too short in proportion to disk, and too pale. Some are very large bushes with a great profusion of buds now. Some are paler and have longer linear rays, split once or twice.

The *D. linariifolius* is interesting, with its commonly single flower, with very broad rays turned backward, or handsomer still when it has fifteen or twenty heads crowded together.

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The *undulatus* has a very bushy spreading panicle of a great many middle-sized flowers of not many commonly slender and open rays. Often paler and broader than these.

The *Tradescanti* attracts attention in a vase, and carries off the palm with many, for its often perfect hollow pyramids of flowers with yellow or purplish disks.

The *dumosus*, too, is clearest white and neat. The *D. umbellatus*, a small sprig with its convex top, is a great ornament to the collection. The *miser* is like a broad-leaved and more spreading *Tradescanti* with still broader and more purplish disks, the rays turned back.

A strawberry blossoms again in meadow.

For three weeks the woods have had a strong musty smell from decaying fungi. The maple-leaved viburnum berries are a dark purple or black now. They are scarce. The red pyrus berries are ripe. The dense oval bunches of arum berries now startle the walker in swamps. They are a brilliant vermilion on a rich ground, seen where they have fallen off, which ground turns dark-purple. Saw an orange, and also a very bright yellow, slender fungus. *Solidago latifolia*, only a few out. The medeola berries are now dull glossy and almost blue-black; about three, on slender threads one inch long, arising in the midst of the cup formed by the purple bases of the whorl of three upper leaves. Hear the sharp *quivet* of pigeons at the Thrush Alley clearing. Mistook it for a jay at first, but saw the narrow, swift-flying bird soon. That low, thin, flat fern, already whitening, at Saw Mill Brook cannot be

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the dicksonia, for the segments of its pinnæ are entire. *Solidago puberula* (?) just fairly begun on northwest (?) corner of Ministerial Clearing, behind Everett's; but it is not hoary and has a red stem; very neat and handsome. Found in Hubbard's Close Swamp and at Saw Mill Brook what is perhaps *Aspidium Filix-fœmina*, in fruit, and I think four other kinds which I could not make out, three in fruit. Also *Lycopodium lucidulum*, shining club-moss.

Sept. 3. *Saturday.* I saw this afternoon, on the chimney of the old Hunt house, in mortar filling an oblong square cavity apparently made when the chimney was, the date 1703.[1] The rafters in the garret are for the most part of oak hewn, and more slender (though sufficiently strong and quite sound) than any sawed ones I ever saw. Oak in the old houses, pine in the new.

The soapwort gentian out abundantly in Flint's Bridge Lane, apparently for a week; a surprisingly deep, *faintly* purplish blue. Crowded bunches of ten or a dozen sessile and closed narrow or oblong diamond or sharp dome shape flowers. The whole bunch like many sharp domes of an Oriental city crowded together. I have here actually drawn my pen round one. It is the flowering of the sky. The sky has descended and kissed the earth. In (at top) a whorl of clear, smooth, rich green leaves. Why come these blue flowers thus late in the year? A dome-like crowd of domelets.

[1] [See *Excursions*, p. 201; Riv. 247.]

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Sophia saw last Monday morning (August 29th), going to Boston in the cars, the dew-like frost on the meadows. The hips of the sweet-briar begin to redden. Saw *Polygonum dumetorum* climbing to the top of birches and willows twelve feet high by the path to Peter's along river. It is a rampant climber.

Now is the season for those comparatively rare but beautiful wild berries which are not food for man. If we so industriously collect those berries which are sweet to the palate, it is strange that we do not devote an hour in the year to gathering those which are beautiful to the eye. It behooves me to go a-berrying in this sense once a year at least. Berries which are as beautiful as flowers, but far less known, the fruit of the flower. To fill my basket with the neglected but beautiful fruit of the various species of cornels and viburnums, poke, arum, medeola, thorns, etc.

Saw at the floral show this afternoon some splendid specimens of the sunflower, king of asters, with the disk filled with ligulate flowers.

Sept. 4. 5.30 A. M. — To Nawshawtuct by river.

Roman wormwood's yellow dust on my clothes. Hear a warbling vireo, — something rare. I do not succeed in making two varieties of *Polygonum amphibium.* All mine, from three inches above water and floating to three feet high on dry land, are apparently one. The first, at any rate, must be *aquaticum,* — floating, *nearly* smooth, and leaves more heart-shaped. It appears by insensible gradations to pass into the other. See one or two lilies yet. The fragrance of a

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grape-vine branch, with ripe grapes on it, which I have brought home, fills the whole house. This fragrance is exceedingly rich, surpassing the flavor of any grape.

P. M. — To Cliffs *via* Hubbard's Swamp.

The skunk-cabbage fruit lies flat and black now in the meadow. The *Aster miser* is a pretty flower, with its commonly wide and loose branches, variegated or parti-colored with its white rays and broad purplish (and yellow) disks giving it a modestly parti-colored look, with green leaves of sufficient breadth to relieve the flowers.

Would it not be worth the while to devote one day each year to collecting with pains the different kinds of asters, — perhaps about this time, — and another to the goldenrods?

In Potter's dry pasture I saw the ground black with blackbirds (troopials?). As I approach, the front rank rises and flits a little further back into the midst of the flock, — it rolls up on the edges, — and, being thus alarmed, they soon take to flight, with a loud rippling rustle, but soon alight again, the rear wheeling swiftly into place like well-drilled soldiers. Instead of being an irregular and disorderly crowd, they appear to know and keep their places and wheel with the precision of drilled troops.

The lycopodium now sheds its pollen commonly. The hawks are soaring at the Cliffs. I think I never hear this peculiar, more musical scream, such as the jay appears to imitate, in the spring, only at and after midsummer when the young begin to fly. In Hubbard's

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Swamp Path. Probably *Solidago speciosa*, though not yet in blossom there, very broad leaves, the radical-like plantain, covering the ground, and for the most part no more.

Carried a pail this afternoon to collect goldenrods and berries. The skunk-cabbage common. Hazels high time to gather; bushes browned. After handling some beaked hazelnuts the other day, observed my hand covered with extremely fine, shining, glass-like bristles. Arum in prime. The crowded clusters of shrub oak acorns are very handsome now, the rich, wholesome brown of the cups contrasting with the now clear green acorns, sometimes twenty-four with a breadth of three inches. China-like berries of cornel along the river now abundant, some cymes wholly white; also the panicled there and in swamps, though its little red (?) fingery stems are oftenest bare, but are pretty enough, perhaps, to take the place of the berries. The black choke-berries, as also choke-cherries, are stale. The two-leaved Solomon's-seal has just begun to redden; so the largest one. The creeping juniper berries are now a hoary green but full-grown. The scarlet thorn is in many places quite edible and now a deep scarlet. Polygonum and medeola now. Green-briar only begins to turn. *Viburnum nudum* rather stale. Clintonia probably about gone. Carrion-flower in prime. Maple viburnum fully ripe, like the *dentatum*. *Aralia hispida* getting old. Feverwort now. Rose hips generally beginning; and the two primroses beginning. Elder in prime, and cranberry. Smooth sumach stale. Celtis green.

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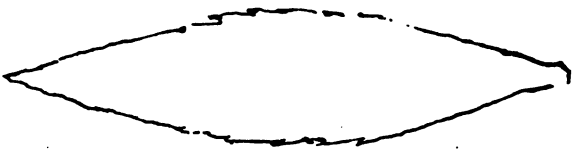
There are, perhaps, four kinds of goldenrod in C. Hubbard's Swamp Path [1] which I am not certain about: one, which I have called *S. puberula*, with reddish stem; another, tall and slender, smooth, with a pyramidal panicle with four to six broad rays, leaves lanceolate, dwindling to mere bracts, appressed and entirish above, *virgata*-like, which I will call *S. virgata*, — though its leaves are not entire, — till I examine the *stricta* again; [2] also another, with thin lanceolate leaves, symmetrically tapering at each end, rough on the edges and serrate, with, I believe, six or seven rays



(specimen now withered), and this I have already named for convenience *ulmifolia*, but the leaves are not elm-like.[3] Also another, with eight to twelve (?) rays and much narrower leaves than the above three, very taper-pointed, sessile, and with margined petiole and wavy upper, entire lower, lanceolate-spatulate, and toothed slightly near end. Has the *stricta* leafets in the axils? [4]

Sept. 5. To Framingham.

Saw, in a meadow in Wayland, at a little distance,

[1] *Stricta* and *puberula*, etc., are there, August, 1859.

[2] This my early low-ground *stricta*-like.

[3] Probably form of *S. altissima*.

[4] *Vide* [p. 422].

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what I have no doubt was an island of *Aster puniceus*, one rod in diameter, — one mass of flowers five feet high.

Sept. 7. R. W. E. brought from Yarmouth this week *Chrysopsis falcata* in bloom and *Vaccinium stamineum*, deerberry, or squaw huckleberry, — the last with green berries, some as large as cranberries, globular (not pear-shaped), on slender peduncles, not edible, in low ground.

Yesterday and to-day and day before yesterday, some hours of very warm weather, as oppressive as any in the year, one's thermometer at 93°.

Sept. 8. Roses, apparently *R. lucida*, abundantly out on a warm bank on Great Fields by Moore's Swamp, with *Viola pedata*.

Sept. 9. Half a bushel of handsome pears on the ground under the wild pear tree on Pedrick's land; some ripe, many more on tree. J. Wesson, who is helping me survey to-day, says that, when they dug the cellar of Stacy's shop, he saw where they cut through (with the spade) birches six inches in diameter, on which the Mill-Dam had been built; also that Nathan Hosmer, Sr., since dead, told him that he had cut meadow-grass between the bakehouse and the Middlesex Hotel. I find myself covered with green and winged lice from the birches.

Sept. 10. The pontederia and pads have already their fall look by river. It is not the work of frost. The *Aster*

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Tradescanti, now in its prime, sugars the banks all along the riverside with a profusion of small white blossoms resounding with the hum of bees. It covered the ground to the depth of two feet over large tracts, looking at a little distance somewhat like a smart hoar frost or sleet or sugaring on the weeds. The banks are sugared with the *A. Tradescanti*.

Sept. 11. *Sunday*. Cool weather. Sit with windows shut, and many by fires. A great change since the 6th, when the heat was so oppressive. The air has got an autumnal coolness which it will not get rid of again.

P. M. — To Dugan's.

I think I can correct somewhat my account of the goldenrods of September 4th, [two] pages back. No. 2 may be *S. stricta*, after all. (*Vide* the one at Hosmer's ditch.) Is not the *puberula* of September 4th same with No. 2? Is not No. 3 one form of *S. altissima*? Doubt if I have seen *S. ulmifolia*. Is not No. 4 the true *S. puberula*? It is the same with that by Marlborough road, September 1st. The *speciosa* may not open for a week yet.

The present appearance of the solidago in Hosmer's ditch which may be *S. stricta* [1] is a stout erect red stem with entire, lanceolate, thick, fleshy, smooth sessile leaves above, gradually increasing in length downward till ten inches long and becoming toothed.[2] All parts very smooth. Not yet out. This apparently same with No. 2.

The *S. nemoralis* is not as fresh as a week ago. Per-

[1] *Vide* Nov. 3d and 4th. [2] Not sharply.

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haps that was the date for the goldenrods generally. Perhaps this is the time for asters. The conspicuous and handsome bluish masses of *A. puniceus*, erect or fallen, stretch in endless rows along the brook, often as high as your head; sometimes make islands in the meadow. *Polygonum articulatum* out, many of them, at the Desert. None out September 1st. Say, then, September 5th. *A. undulatus* is now in prime, very abundant along path-sides. The branches of its panicle are commonly of about equal length on different sides the stem, and as the flowers are crowded and stand vertically on the sides as well as horizontally above, they form one (or sometimes more) conical or pyramidal or cylindrical hollow panicles of middle-sized purplish flowers, roundly bunched.

Signs of frost last night in M. Miles's cleared swamp. Potato vines black. How much farther it is back to frost from the greatest heat of summer, *i. e.* from the 6th [of this month] back to the 1st of June, three months, than forward to it, four days!

Checkerberries are full-grown, but green. They must have been new mitchella berries, then, that I saw some time ago. River cornel berries have begun to disappear. In a stubble-field, I go through a very fine, diffusely branching grass now going to seed, which is like a reddish mist to my eyes, two feet deep, and trembling around me.

There is an aster in Hosmer's ditch, like *longifolius*, with linear leaves remotely toothed, red stem, smooth, three or four feet high, but scales not recurved and flowers much smaller, with many purplish disks.

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Sept. 12. I was struck this afternoon with the beauty of the *Aster corymbosus* with its corymbed flowers, with seven or eight long slender white rays pointed at both ends, ready to curl, shaving-like, and purplish disks, — one of the more interesting asters. The *Smilacina racemosa* berries are well red now; probably with the two-leaved.

It occurred to me when I awoke this morning, feeling regret for intemperance of the day before in eating fruit, which had dulled my sensibilities, that man was to be treated as a musical instrument, and if any viol was to be made of sound timber and kept well tuned always, it was he, so that when the bow of events is drawn across him he may vibrate and resound in perfect harmony. A sensitive soul will be continually trying its strings to see if they are in tune. A man's body must be rasped down exactly to a shaving. It is of far more importance than the wood of a Cremona violin.

[Here follows an account of Thoreau's second excursion to the Maine woods, which began September 13th. As the story is told elsewhere, virtually in the language of the Journal, it is here omitted, with the exception of a few scattered sentences and paragraphs which for one reason or another were not used in the paper entitled "Chesuncook."]

Sept. 16. *Friday.* He [Joe Atean or Aitteon][1] said the stone-heaps (though we saw none) were made by chub.

[1] [In the Journal the name of the guide appears as Atean, and Thoreau "thought it might be the French Étienne, though Joe pronounced

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Sept. 17. *Saturday.*

The head [of the moose],[1] measuring from the root of the ears to the end of the nose or upper lip	2 feet	2½ inches
Head and neck (from nose to breast (?) direct)	4 "	3½ "
Fore leg below level of body	4 "	9⅓ "
Height behind (from the tips of the hoofs to top of back)	6 "	11 "
Height from tips of hoofs to level with back above shoulders [2]	7 "	5 "
Extreme length (from nose to tail)	8 "	2 "

The ears 10 inches long.

Sept. 18. *Sunday.* One end of the log hut[3] was a camp, with the usual fir floor and log benches and a clerk's office. I measured one of the many batteaux lying about, with my two-foot ash rule made here. It was not peculiar in any respect that I noticed.

Extreme length	31 feet
Extreme width	5½ "
Width of bottom	$2\frac{2}{12}$ "
Length of "	$20\frac{9}{12}$ "
" " bow	$6\frac{10}{12}$ "
" " stern	3½ "
Depth within	17 inches.

Sept. 19. *Monday.* I looked very narrowly at the vegetation as we glided along close to the shore, and

it *At*, etc." This is probably a more correct spelling than the Aitteon of the book. Mrs. Fannie Hardy Eckstorm in *The Penobscot Man* (Boston, 1904) gives a considerable account of this man and his exploits and spells his name "Attien."]

[1] [See *Maine Woods*, p. 126; Riv. 153.]

[2] [See *ibid.*, where Thoreau says this measurement was incorrect.]

[3] [Ansell Smith's. See *Maine Woods*, pp. 137–144; Riv. 167–176.]

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now and then made Joe turn aside for me to pluck a plant, that I might see what was primitive about our Concord River.

Sept. 20. *Tuesday.* About Hinckley's camp I saw the *Fringilla hyemalis;* also a bird a little smaller, maybe, brownish and yellowish, with some white tail-feathers, which I think makes the *tull-lull* sound, hopping on the wood-pile. Is not this the myrtle-bird? Their note interested me because I formerly had many a chase in a spring morning in the direction of this sound, in vain, to identify the bird. The lumberers said it came round the camps, and they gave it a vulgar name. Also, about the carry, a chubby sparrow with dark-brown or black stripes on the head. Saw a large and new woodpecker, probably the red-headed, making a noise like the pigeon woodpecker.

. . . . . .

There was one woman on board, who got in at the Kineo House, who looked oddly in the one saloon for gentlemen and ladies, amid the red shirts of the lumbermen. It rained very hard while we were aboard the steamer. We had a small sloop in tow, and another stopped to speak with us, to inquire after a man who was missing. A fortnight before, he had left his horse and carriage at Sawyer's, saying that he was going to get a moose and should be back in two days. He set out in a birch alone from the south end of the lake. At length they had sent the horse home, which brought on his friends, who were now looking for him and feared that he was lost in the lake. It

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was not very wise to set out in a canoe from the south end of the lake to kill a moose in two days. They thought that if he had fallen in with one Whitton, a hunter, he was safe enough.

Sept. 21. Started at 7 A. M., Wednesday. In Guilford I went into a clapboard-mill on the Piscataquis. In this town we took a new route, keeping the north side of the Piscataquis at first, through Foxcroft, Dover (quite a town), Garland, Charleston, East Corinth, Levant, Glenburn, and Hermon, to Bangor. Saw robins in flocks going south. Rode in the rain again. A few oaks near Bangor. Rained all day, which prevented the view of Ktaadn, otherwise to be seen in very many places. Stumps cut high, showing the depth of the snows. Straight roads and long hills. The country was level to the eye for twenty or thirty miles toward the Penobscot Valley. Most towns have an academy. Even away up toward the lake we saw a sort of gallows erected near one for the pupils to exercise upon.[1] I had not dreamed of such degeneracy so hard upon the primitive wilderness. The white pines near Bangor perfectly parti-colored and falling to-day. Reached Bangor at dark.

Sept. 22. *Thursday.* He[2] had made speeches at the Legislature. He and a companion were once put into

[1] [*Maine Woods*, p. 98; Riv. 118.]

[2] [Governor Neptune of the Penobscot tribe. See *Maine Woods*, pp. 162–165; Riv. 199–203.]

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the bootblacks' room at the hotel in Portland, when attending the Legislature. In the morning they walked off in disgust to see the Governor of the State. He asked what was the matter. They said they could not stay there; there was too much boot there; Indians did not like boot any more than white man. The Governor saw the matter righted.

. . . . . .

Behind one house, an Indian had nearly finished one canoe and was just beginning another, outdoors. I looked very narrowly at the process and had already carefully examined and measured our birch. We asked this Indian his name. He answered readily and pleasantly, "My name is Old John Pennyweight." [1] Said he got his bark at the head of Passadumkeag, fifty miles off. Took him two days to find one tree that was suitable; had to look very sharp to be sure the bark was not imperfect. But once he made two birches out of one tree. Took the bark off with a shovel made of rock maple, three or four inches wide. It took him a fortnight or three weeks to complete a canoe after he had got the materials ready. They sometimes made them of spruce bark, and also of skins, but they were not so good as birch. Boats of three hides were quicker made. This was the best time to get the birch bark. It would not come off in the winter. (I had heard Joe say of a certain canoe that it was made of summer bark.) They scrape all the inner bark off, and in the canoe the bark is wrong side outward.

[1] [*Maine Woods*, p. 165; Riv. 203.]

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He had the ribs of a canoe, all got out of cedar, — the first step in making a canoe, after materials [have been] brought together, — and each one shaped for the particular place it was to hold in the canoe. As both ends are alike, there will be two ribs alike. These two were placed close together, and the next in succession each way were placed next on each side, and thus tied up in bundles of fourteen to sixteen till all were made. In the bundle I examined, they were two and a half inches wide in the middle and narrowing to the ends. He would untie a bundle, take out the inmost, or longest, or several, and place them on their ends in a very large iron kettle of hot water over a fire, turning them from time to time. Then, taking one of the inmost or longest ones, he bent and shaped it with much labor over his knee, giving it with his eyes the shape it was to have in the canoe. It was then tied firmly and held in that shape with the reddish cedar bark. Sometimes he was obliged to tie a straight piece of wood on tangentwise to the rib, and, with a bark tie, draw out a side of the rib to that.

Then each succeeding smaller rib in one half the bundle is forced into this. The first bundles of fourteen or sixteen making two bundles of steamed and bent and tied-up ribs; and thus all are left to dry in that shape.

I was sorry that I could not be there to witness the next step in making a canoe, for I was much struck by the *method* of this work, and the process deserves to be minutely described, — as much, at least, as most

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of the white man's arts, accounts of which now fill the journals. I do not know how the bark is made to hug so tightly the ribs, unless they are driven into place somewhat like a hoop. One of the next things must be to make the long, thin sheathing of cedar, less than half an inch thick, of pieces half the length of the birch, reaching each way close together beneath the ribs, and quite thin toward the edges of the canoe. However, I examined the canoe that was nearly done with minuteness. The edge or taffrail is composed first of two long strips of cedar, rather stout, one on each side. Four narrow hardwood (rock maple) cross-bars, artfully shaped so that no strength may be wasted, keep these apart, give firmness to the whole, and answer for seats. The ends of the ribs come up behind or outside this taffrail and are nailed to it with a single nail. Pennyweight said they formerly used wooden pegs.[1] The edge of the bark

is brought up level with this, and a very slender triangular cleat of cedar is nailed on over it and flush with the surface of the taffrail. Then there are ties of split white spruce bark (looking like split bamboo) through the bark, between the ribs, and around these two strips of cedar, and over the two strips one flat and thin strip covering the ties, making smooth work and coming out flush with the under strips. Thus the edge of the canoe is completed.

Owing to the form of the canoe, there must be some seams near the edge on the sides about eighteen inches apart, and pieces

[1] Polis canoe in '57 had them.

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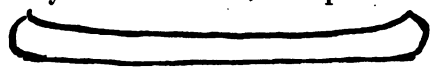
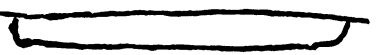
of bark are put under them. The edges of the bark are carefully sewed together at the ends with the same spruce roots, and, in our canoe, a strip of canvas covered with pitch was laid (doubled) over the edge. They use rosin now, but pitch formerly. Canoe is  nearly straight on bottom—straight in principle—and not so rounded the other way as is supposed. *Vide* this section in middle. The sides bulge out an inch or so beyond the rail. There is an additional piece of bark, four or five inches wide, along each side in the middle for four or five feet, for  protection, and a similar protecting strip for eighteen inches on each side at the ends. The canoe rises about one foot in the last five or six feet. There is an oval piece of cedar for stiffness inside, within a foot of each end, and near this the ribs are bent short to breaking. Beyond there are not ribs, but sheaths and a small keel-like piece, and the hollow is filled with shavings. Lightness, above all, is studied in the construction. Nails and rosin were all the modern things I noticed. The maker used one of those curved knives, and worked very hard at bending the knees.

. . . . . .

Went into a batteau manufactory. Said they made knees of almost anything; that they were about worn out in one trip up river. Were worth fourteen or sixteen dollars, lumber being high. Weigh three hundred (?) [pounds], just made, though he did n't know

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exactly about it. Long spike poles, with a screw in the spike to make it hold.

Sept. 23. *Friday.* Walked down the riverside this forenoon to the hill where they were using a steam-shovel at the new railroad cut, and thence to a hill three quarters of a mile further. Saw *Aster undulatus*, *Solidago nemoralis*, fragrant everlasting, silvery cinquefoil, small white birch, *Lobelia inflata*, both kinds of primrose, low cudweed, lactuca, *Polygonum cilinode* (apparently out of bloom), yellow oxalis. I returned across the fields behind the town, and over the highest hill behind Bangor, and up the Kenduskieg, from which I saw the Ebeeme Mountains in the northwest and hills we had come by. The arbor-vitæ is the prevailing shrub.

Sept. 24. *Saturday.* Saw Ktaadn from a hill about two miles northwest of Bangor on the road to Pushaw. It is about eighty miles from Bangor. This was the nearest point from which we made out to see it. In the afternoon, walked up the Kenduskieg. White goldenrod, fall dandelion, hog peanut, *Solidago arguta* [1] and *altissima*, *Aster macrophyllus* (?), and red maple (?). Witch-hazel well out. *Epilobium coloratum*, *Solidago squarrosa*, *S. latifolia*, *Aster cordifolius* (?).

Sept. 25. *Sunday.* Dined with Lowell. Said the largest pine Goddard's men cut last winter scaled in the woods forty-five hundred feet board measure,

[1] That is, probably *gigantea*.

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and was worth ninety dollars at the Bangor boom, Oldtown. They cut a road three miles and a half for this alone. They do not make much of a path, however. From L. I learned that the untouched white pine timber which comes down the Penobscot waters is to be found at the head of the East Branch and the head waters of the Allegash, about Eagle Lake and Chamberlain, etc., and Webster Stream. But Goddard had bought the stumpage in eight townships in New Brunswick. They are also buying up townships across the Canada line.

Sept. 26 and 27. Monday and Tuesday I was coming to Boston and Concord. Aboard the steamer Boston were several droves of sheep and oxen and a great crowd of passengers.

Sept. 28. Wednesday. In Concord.

The elm leaves are falling. The fringed gentian was out before Sunday; was (some of it) withered then, says Edith Emerson.

Sept. 29. Thursday. Cool and windy. Wind roars in the trees. *Viola cucullata, Aster puniceus* and *longifolius* still. *Solidago speciosa* out in Hubbard's Swamp since I went away, — say ten days ago. This must be a late one, then. *Diplopappus linariifolius, Aster undulatus,* and a few small ones. Red oak acorns fall. The witch-hazel at Lee's Cliff, in a fair situation, has but begun to blossom; has not been long out, so that I think it must be later than the gentian. Its

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leaves are yellowed. Barberry ripe. Sumachs and maples changed, but not trees generally. Bluets still. *Viburnum Lentago* berries yet. Lambkill blossoms again.

Sept. 30. *Friday.* Saw a large flock of black ducks flying northwest in the form of a harrow.

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VIII

OCTOBER, 1853

(ÆT. 36)

Oct. 1. *Saturday.* Went a-barberrying by boat to Conantum, carrying Ellen, Edith, and Eddie. Grape-vines, curled, crisped, and browned by the frosts, are now more conspicuous than ever. Some grapes still hang on the vines. Got three pecks of barberries. Huckleberries begin to redden. Robins and blue-birds collect and flit about. Flowers are scarce.

Oct. 2. *Sunday.* The gentian in Hubbard's Close is frost-bitten extensively. As the [witch-] hazel is raised above frost and can afford to be later, for this reason also I think it is so. The white pines have scarcely begun at all to change here, though a week ago last Wednesday they were fully changed at Bangor. There is fully a fortnight's difference, and methinks more. The [witch-] hazel, too, was more forward there. There are but few and faint autumnal tints about Walden yet. The smooth sumach is but a dull red.

Oct. 3. *Viola lanceolata* in Moore's Swamp.

Oct. 4. The maples are reddening, and birches yellowing. The mouse-ear in the shade in the middle of the day, so hoary, looks as if the frost still lay on

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it. Well it wears the frost. Bumblebees are on the *Aster undulatus*, and gnats are dancing in the air.

Oct. 5. The howling of the wind about the house just before a storm to-night sounds extremely like a loon on the pond. How fit!

Oct. 6 *and* 7. Windy. Elms bare.

Oct. 8. Found a bird's nest (*?*) converted into a mouse's nest in the prinos swamp, while surveying on the new Bedford road to-day, topped over with moss, and a hole on one side, like a squirrel-nest.

Oct. 9. *Sunday.* A high wind south of westerly. Set sail with W. E. C. down the river.

The red maples are now red and also yellow and reddening. The white maples are green and silvery, also yellowing and blushing. The birch is yellow; the black willow brown; the elms sere, brown, and thin; the bass bare. The button-bush, which was so late, is already mostly bare except the lower part, protected. The swamp white oak is green with a brownish tinge; the white ash turned mulberry. The white maples toward Ball's Hill have a burnt white appearance; the white oak a salmon-color and also red. Is that scarlet oak rosed? Huckleberries and blackberries are red. Leaves are falling; apples more distinctly seen on the trees; muskrat-houses not quite done.

This wind carried us along glibly, I think six miles an hour, till we stopped in Billerica, just below the

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first bridge beyond the Carlisle Bridge, — at the Hibiscus Shore. I collected some hibiscus seeds and swamp white oak acorns, and we walked on thence, a mile or more further, over scrubby hills which with a rocky core border the western shore, still in Billerica, at last not far above the mills. At one place, opposite what I once called Grape Island (still unchanged), I smelled grapes, and though I saw no vines at first, they being bare of leaves, at last found the grapes quite plenty and ripe and fresh enough on the ground under my feet. Ah! their scent is very penetrating and memorable. Did we not see a fish hawk? We found ourselves in an extensive wood there, which we did not get out of. It took the rest of the day to row back against the wind.

Oct. 10. This morning it is very pleasant and warm. There are many small birds in flocks on the elms in Cheney's field, faintly warbling, — robins and purple finches and especially large flocks of small sparrows, which make a business of washing and pruning themselves in the puddles in the road, as if cleaning up after a long flight and the wind of yesterday. The faint suppressed warbling of the robins sounds like a reminiscence of the spring.

Cooler and windy at sunset, and the elm leaves come down again.

Oct. 11. Sassafras leaves are a rich yellow now and falling fast. They come down in showers on the least touching of the tree. I was obliged to cut a small

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one while surveying the Bedford road to-day. What singularly and variously formed leaves! For the most part three very regular long lobes, but also some simple leaves; but here is one shaped just like a hand or a mitten with a thumb. They next turn a dark cream-color.

Father saw to-day in the end of a red oak stick in his wood-shed, three and a half inches in diameter, which was sawed yesterday, something shining. It is lead, either the side of a bullet or a large buckshot just a quarter of an inch in diameter. It came from the Ministerial Lot in the southwest part of the town, and we bought the wood of Martial Miles. It is completely and snugly buried under some twelve or fifteen layers of the wood, and it appears not to have penetrated originally more than its own thickness, for there is a very close fit all around it, and the wood has closed over it very snugly and soundly, while on every other side it is killed, though snug for an eighth of an inch around it.

Oct. 12. To-day I have had the experience of borrowing money for a poor Irishman who wishes to get his family to this country. One will never know his neighbors till he has carried a subscription paper among them. Ah! it reveals many and sad facts to stand in this relation to them. To hear the selfish and cowardly excuses some make, — that *if* they help any they must help the Irishman who lives with them, — and him they are sure never to help! Others, with whom public opinion weighs, will think of it, trust-

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ing you never will raise the sum and so they will not be called on again; who give stingily after all. What a satire in the fact that you are much more inclined to call on a certain slighted and so-called crazy woman in moderate circumstances rather than on the president of the bank! But some are generous and save the town from the distinction which threatened it, and *some* even who do not lend, plainly would if they could.

Oct. 14. *Friday.* A Mr. Farquhar of Maryland came to see me; spent the day and the night. Fine, clear Indian-summer weather.

Oct. 15. *Saturday.* Last night the first smart frost that I have witnessed. Ice formed under the pump, and the ground was white long after sunrise. And now, when the morning wind rises, how the leaves come down in showers after this touch of the frost! They suddenly form thick beds or carpets on the ground in this gentle air, — or without wind, — just the size and form of the tree above. Silvery cinquefoil.

Oct. 16. *Sunday.* The third pleasant day. Hunter's Moon. Walked to White Pond. The *Polygonum dumetorum* in Tarbell's Swamp lies thick and twisted, rolled together, over the loose raised twigs on the ground, as if woven over basketwork, though it is now all sere. The *Marchantia polymorpha* is still erect there. *Viola ovata* out. The *Lysimachia stricta*, with its long bulblets in the axils, how green and fresh by the shore of the pond!

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Oct. 18. P. M. — With Sophia boated to Fair Haven, where she made a sketch.

The red maples have been bare a good while. In the sun and this clear air, their bare ashy branches even sparkle like silver. The woods are losing their bright colors. The muskrat-houses are more sharpened now. I find my boat all covered — the bottom and seats — with the yellow leaves of the golden willow under which it is moored, and if I empty it, it is full again to-morrow.[1] Some white oaks are salmon-red, some lighter and drier. The black oaks are a greenish yellow. Poplars (*grandidentata*) clear, rich yellow. How like some black rocks that stand in the river are these muskrat-houses! They are singularly conspicuous for the dwellings of animals.

The river is quite low now, lower than for many weeks, and accordingly the white lily pads have their stems too long, and they rise above the water four or five inches and are looped over and downward to the sunken pad with its face down. They make a singular appearance. Returning late, we see a double shadow of ourselves and boat, one, the true, quite black, the other directly above it and very faint, on the willows and high bank.

Oct. 19. *Wednesday.* Paddled E. Hoar and Mrs. King up the North Branch.

A seed of wild oat left on.

The leaves have fallen so plentifully that they quite conceal the water along the shore, and rustle pleasantly

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 266; Riv. 326, 327.]

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when the wave which the boat creates strikes them. On Sunday last, I could hardly find the Corner Spring, and suspected even it had dried up, for it was completely concealed by fresh-fallen leaves, and when I swept them aside and revealed it, it was like striking the earth for a new spring. At Beck Stow's, surveying, thinking to step upon a leafy shore from a rail, I got into water more than a foot deep and had to wring my stockings out; but this is anticipating.[1]

Oct. 20. How pleasant to walk over beds of these fresh, crisp, and rustling fallen leaves, — young hyson, green tea, clean, crisp, and wholesome! How beautiful they go to their graves! how gently lay themselves down and turn to mould! — painted of a thousand hues and fit to make the beds of us living. So they troop to their graves, light and frisky. They put on no weeds. Merrily they go scampering over the earth, selecting their graves, whispering all through the woods about it. They that waved so loftily, how contentedly they return to dust again and are laid low, resigned to lie and decay at the foot of the tree. and afford nourishment to new generations of their kind, as well as to flutter on high! How they are mixed up, all species, — oak and maple and chestnut and birch! They are about to add a leaf's breadth to the depth of the soil. We are all the richer for their decay. Nature is not cluttered with them. She is a perfect husbandman; she stores them all.[2]

[1] [*Excursions*, pp. 266, 267; Riv. 326, 327.]

[2] [*Excursions*, pp. 268–270; Riv. 329–331.]

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While I was wringing my wet stockings (*vide* last page), sitting by the side of Beck Stow's, I heard a rush of wings, looked up, and saw three dusky ducks swiftly circling over the small water. They rounded far away, but soon returned and settled within about four rods. They first survey the spot. Wonder they did not see me. At first they are suspicious, hold up their heads and sail about. Do they not see me through the thin border of leafless bushes? At last one dips his bill, and they begin to feed amid the pads. I suddenly rise, and [they] instantly dive as at a flash, then at once rise again and all go off, with a low wiry note.

Oct. 22. A week or more of fairest Indian summer ended last night, for to-day it rains. It was so warm day before yesterday, I worked in my shirt-sleeves in the woods.

I cannot easily dismiss the subject of the fallen leaves. How densely they cover and conceal the water for several feet in width, under and amid the alders and button-bushes and maples along the shore of the river, — still light, tight, and dry boats, dense cities of boats, their fibres not relaxed by the waters, undulating and rustling with every wave, of such various pure and delicate, though fading, tints, — of hues that might make the fame of teas, — dried on great Nature's coppers. And then see this great fleet of scattered leaf boats, still tight and dry, each one curled up on every side by the sun's skill, like boats of hide, scarcely moving in the sluggish current, — like the great fleets with which you mingle on entering some great mart,

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some New York which we are all approaching together. Or else they are slowly moving round in some great eddy which the river makes, where the water is deep and the current is wearing into the bank. How gently each has been deposited on the water! No violence has been used toward them yet. But next the shore, as thick as foam they float, and when you turn your prow that way, list! what a rustling of the crisped waves! Wet grounds about the edges of swamps look dry with them, and many a wet foot you get in consequence.

Consider what a vast crop is thus annually shed upon the earth. This, more than any mere grain or seed, is the great harvest of the year. This annual decay and death, this dying by inches, before the whole tree at last lies down and turns to soil. As trees shed their leaves, so deer their horns, and men their hair or nails. The year's great crop. I am more interested in it than in the English grass alone or in the corn. It prepares the virgin mould for future cornfields on which the earth fattens. They teach us how to die. How many flutterings before they rest quietly in their graves! A myriad wrappers for germinating seeds. By what subtle chemistry they will mount up again, climbing by the sap in the trees. The ground is all parti-colored with them.

For beautiful variety can any crop be compared with them? The dogwood (poison sumach) blazing its sins as scarlet, the early-blushing maple, the rich chrome (?) yellow of the poplar, the mulberry ash, the brilliant red huckleberry with which the hills'

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backs are painted like sheep's, — not merely the plain flavidness of corn, but all the colors of the rainbow. The salmon-colored oaks, etc., etc. The frost touches them, and, with the slightest breath of day or jarring of earth's axle, see in what showers they come floating down, at the first earnest touch of autumn's wand. They stoop to rise, to mount higher in coming years by subtiler chemistry, and the sapling's first fruits, thus shed, transmuted at last, may adorn its crown, when, in after years, it has become the monarch of the forest.[1]

Yesterday, toward night, gave Sophia and mother a sail as far as the Battle-Ground. One-eyed John Goodwin, the fisherman, was loading into a hand-cart and conveying home the piles of driftwood which of late he had collected with his boat. It was a beautiful evening, and a clear amber sunset lit up all the eastern shores; and that man's employment, so simple and direct, — though he is regarded by most as a vicious character, — whose whole motive was so easy to fathom, — thus to obtain his winter's wood, — charmed me unspeakably. So much do we love actions that are simple. They are all poetic. We, too, would fain be so employed. So unlike the pursuits of most men, so artificial or complicated. Consider how the broker collects his winter's wood, what sport he makes of it, what is his boat and hand-cart! Postponing instant life, he makes haste to Boston in the cars, and there deals in stocks, not quite relishing his employment, — and so earns the money with which he buys his fuel. And when, by chance, I meet him about this indirect

[1] [*Excursions*, pp. 265–270; Riv. 324–331.]

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and complicated business, I am not struck with the beauty of his employment. It does not harmonize with the sunset. How much more the former consults his genius, some genius at any rate! Now I should love to get my fuel so, — I have got some so, — but though I may be glad to have it, I do not love to get it in any other way less simple and direct. For if I buy one necessary of life, I cheat myself to some extent, I deprive myself of the pleasure, the inexpressible joy, which is the unfailing reward of satisfying any want of our nature simply and truly.

No *trade* is simple, but artificial and complex. It postpones life and substitutes death. It goes against the grain. If the first generation does not die of it, the third or fourth does. In face of all statistics, I will never believe that it is the descendants of tradesmen who keep the state alive, but of simple yeomen or laborers. This, indeed, statistics say of the city reinforced by the country. The oldest, wisest politician grows not more human so, but is merely a gray wharf rat at last. He makes a habit of disregarding the moral right and wrong for the legal or political, commits a slow suicide, and thinks to recover by retiring on to a farm at last. This simplicity it is, and the vigor it imparts, that enables the simple vagabond, though he does get drunk and is sent to the house of correction so often, to hold up his head among men.

"If I go to Boston every day and sell tape from morning till night," says the merchant (which we will admit is not a beautiful action), "some time or other I shall be able to buy the best of fuel without stint."

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Yes, but not the pleasure of picking it up by the river-side, which, I may say, is of more value than the warmth it yields, for it but keeps the vital heat in us that we may repeat such pleasing exercises. It warms us twice, and the first warmth is the most wholesome and memorable, compared with which the other is mere coke. It is to give no account of my employment to say that I cut wood to keep me from freezing, or cultivate beans to keep me from starving. Oh, no, the greatest value of these labors is received before the wood is teamed home, or the beans are harvested (or winnowed from it). Goodwin stands on the solid earth. The earth looks solider under him, and for such as he no *political* economies, with *their* profit and loss, supply and demand, need ever be written, for they will need to use no policy. As for the complex ways of living, I love them not, however much I practice them. In as many places as possible, I will get my feet down to the earth. There is no secret in his trade, more than in the sun's. It is no mystery how he gets his living; no, not even when he steals it. But there is less double-dealing in his living than in your trade.

Goodwin is a most constant fisherman. He must well know the taste of pickerel by this time. He will fish, I would not venture to say how many days in succession. When I can remember to have seen him fishing almost daily for some time, if it rains, I am surprised on looking out to see him slowly wending his way to the river in his oilcloth coat, with his basket and pole. I saw him the other day fishing in the middle of the stream, the day after I had seen him fishing on

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the shore, while by a kind of magic I sailed by him; and he said he was catching minnow for bait in the winter. When I was twenty rods off, he held up a pickerel that weighed two and a half pounds, which he had forgot to show me before, and the next morning, as he afterward told me, he caught one that weighed three pounds. If it is ever necessary to appoint a committee on fish-ponds and pickerel, let him be one of them. Surely he is tenacious of life, hard to scale.

Oct. 23. *Sunday.* P. M. — Down railroad to chestnut wood on Pine Hill.

A pleasant day, but breezy. I see a downy woodpecker tapping an apple tree, and hear, when I have passed, his sharp, metallic note. I notice these flowers still along the railroad causeway: fresh sprouts from the root of the *Solidago nemoralis* in bloom, one or two fall dandelions, red clover and white, yarrow, *Trifolium arvense* (perhaps not fresh), one small blue snapdragon, fresh tansy in bloom on the sunny sandbank. There are green leaves on the ends of elder twigs; blackberry vines still red; apple trees yellow and brown and partly bare; white ash bare (nearly); golden willows yellow and brown; white birches, exposed, are nearly bare; some pines still parti-colored. White, black, and red oaks still hold most of their leaves. What a peculiar red has the white! And some black have now a rich brown. The *Populus grandidentata* near railroad, bare; the *P. tremuloides*, half bare. The hickories are finely crisped, yellow, more or less browned. Several yellow butterflies in the meadow.

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And many birds flit before me along the railroad, with faint notes, too large for linarias. Can they be tree sparrows? Some weeks.[1] Many phenomena remind me that now is to some extent a second spring, — not only the new-springing and blossoming of flowers, but the peeping of the hylodes for some time, and the faint warbling of their spring notes by many birds. Everywhere in the fields I see the white, hoary (ashy-colored) sceptres of the gray goldenrod. Others are slightly yellowish still. The yellow is gone out of them, as the last flake of sunshine disappears from a field when the clouds are gathering. But though their golden hue is gone, their reign is not over. Compact puffed masses of seeds ready to take wing. They will send out their ventures from hour to hour the winter through. The *Viola pedata* looking up from so low in the wood-path makes a singular impression.

I go through Brooks's Hollow. The hazels bare, only here and there a few sere, curled leaves on them. The red cherry is bare. The blue flag seed-vessels at Walden are bursting, — six closely packed brown rows.

I find my clothes all bristling as with a *chevaux-de-frise* of beggar-ticks, which hold on for many days. A storm of arrows these weeds have showered on me, as I went through their moats. How irksome the task to rid one's self of them! We are fain to let some adhere. Through thick and thin I wear some; hold on many days. In an instant a thousand seeds of the bidens fastened themselves firmly to my clothes, and

[1] Probably the white-in-tail [*i. e.* vesper sparrow, or grass finch].

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I carried them for miles, planting one here and another there. They are as thick on my clothes as the teeth of a comb.

The prinos is bare, leaving red berries. The pond has gone down suddenly and surprisingly since I was here last, and this pool is left, cut off at a higher level, stagnant and drying up. This is its first decided going down since its going up a year or two ago. The red-looking water purslane is left bare, and the water-target leaves are turned brown and drying up on the bare mud. The clethra partly bare, crisped, yellowish and brown, with its fruit with persistent styles (?) in long racemes. Here are dense fields of light-colored rattlesnake grass drooping with the weight of their seeds.

The high blueberries about the pond have still a few leaves left on, turned bright scarlet red. These it is adorn the shore so, seen at a distance, small but very bright. The panicled andromeda is thinly clad with yellow and brown leaves, not sere. Alders are green. Smooth sumach bare. Chestnuts commonly bare. I now notice the round red buds of the high blueberry. The blue-stemmed, and also the white, solidago on Walden bank. Small sassafras trees bare. The *Aster undulatus* is still quite abundant and fresh on this high, sunny bank, — far more so than the *Solidago cæsia*, — and methinks it is the latest of our asters and is besides the most common or conspicuous flower now. It is in large, dense masses, two or three feet high, pale purple or whitish, and covered with humble-bees. The radical leaves, now hearted and crenatish,

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are lake beneath. Also a hieracium quite freshly bloomed, but with white, bristly leaves and smooth stem, about twenty-flowered; peduncles and involucres glandular-hairy. Is it *Gronovii* or veiny-leaved? Almost as slender as the panicled. (In press.) No gerardias. Strawberries are red and green. It is the season of fuzzy seeds, — goldenrods, everlasting, senecio, asters, epilobium, etc., etc. *Viburnum Lentago*, with ripe berries and dull-glossy red leaves; young black cherry, fresh green or yellow; mayweed. The chestnuts have mostly fallen. One *Diplopappus linariifolius* in bloom, its leaves all yellow or red. This and *A. undulatus* the asters seen to-day.

The red oak now red, perhaps inclining to scarlet; the white, with that peculiar ingrained redness; the shrub oak, a clear thick leather-color; some dry black oak, darker brown; chestnut, light brown; hickory, yellow, turning brown. These the colors of some leaves I brought home.

Oct. 24. Early on Nawshawtuct.

Black willows bare. Golden willow with yellow leaves. Larch yellow. Most alders by river bare except at top. Waxwork shows red. Celtis almost bare, with greenish-yellow leaves at top. Some hickories bare, some with rich golden-brown leaves. Locusts half bare, with greenish-yellow leaves. Catnip fresh and green and in bloom. Barberries green, reddish, or scarlet. Cranberry beds at distance in meadows (from hill) are red, for a week or more. Lombardy poplar yellow. Red maples and elms alone very con-

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spicuously bare in our landscape. White thorns bare, and berries mostly fallen, reddening the ground. Hedge-mustard still fresh and in bloom. Button-woods half bare. The rock maple leaves a clear yellow; now and then [one] shows some blood in its veins, and blushes. People are busy raking the leaves before their houses; some put them over their strawberries.

It has rained all day, filling the streams. Just after dark, high southerly winds arise, but very warm, blowing the rain against the windows and roof and shaking the house. It is very dark withal, so that I can hardly find my way to a neighbor's. We think of vessels on the coast, and shipwrecks, and how this will bring down the remaining leaves and to-morrow morning the street will be strewn with rotten limbs of the elms amid the leaves and puddles, and some loose chimney or crazy building will have fallen. Some fear to go to bed, lest the roof be blown off.

Oct. 25. 7 A. M. — To Hubbard's Grove.

The rain is over, the ground swept and washed. There is a high and cold west wind. Birds fly with difficulty against it (are they tree sparrows?). The brooks and the river are unexpectedly swelled with yesterday's rain. The river is a very dark blue. The wind roars in the wood. A maple is blown down. *Aster longifolius* in low ground (a *few*). This and the *Diplopappus linariifolius*, and, above all, *A. undulatus*, the only flowers of the kind seen this week.[1]

[1] Afterwards *A. puniceus*, *Tradescanti*, and one *lævis*! *Vide* bottom of next page.

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P. M. — Sailed down river to the pitch pine hill behind Abner Buttrick's, with a strong northwest wind, and cold.

Saw a telltale on Cheney's shore, close to the water's edge. I am not quite sure whether it is the greater or lesser, but am inclined to think that all I have seen are the lesser. It was all white below and dark above, with a pure white tail prettily displayed in flying. It kept raising its head with a jerk as if it had the St. Vitus's dance. It would alight in the water and swim like a little duck. Once, when I went ashore and started it, it flew so as to bring a willow between it and me, and alighted quite near, much nearer than before, to spy me. When it went off, it uttered a sharp *te-te-te-te-te*, flying with quivering wings, dashing about. I think that the storm of yesterday and last night brought it up.

The white maples are completely bare. The tall dry grass along the shore rustles in the cold wind. The shores are very naked now. I am surprised to see how much the river has risen. The swamp white oaks in front of N. Barrett's — their leafy tops — look quite silvery at a distance in the sun, very different from near to. In *some* places along the water's edge the *Aster Tradescanti* lingers still, some flowers purple, others white. The ground is strewn with pine-needles as sunlight. The iron-wood is nearly bare (on the Flint Bridge Rock). I see one or two specimens of the *Polygonum hydropiperoides* and the smaller, nameless one in flower still. They last thus till the severe frosts. There are masses of the yellow water ranunculus

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washed up by the shore after this high wind. This is one of our *river* weeds. The shepherd's-purse in bloom.

Oct. 26. I well remember the time this year when I first heard the dream of the toads. I was laying out house-lots on Little River in Haverhill. We had had some raw, cold and wet weather. But this day was remarkably warm and pleasant, and I had thrown off my outside coat. I was going home to dinner, past a shallow pool, which was green with springing grass, and where a new house was about being erected, when it occurred to me that I heard the dream of the toad. It rang through and filled all the air, though I had not heard it once. And I turned my companion's attention to it, but he did not appear to perceive it as a new sound in the air. Loud and prevailing as it is, most men do not notice it at all. It is to them, perchance, a sort of simmering or seething of all nature. That afternoon the dream of the toads rang through the elms by Little River and affected the thoughts of men, though they were not conscious that they heard it.

How watchful we must be to keep the crystal well that we were made, clear! — that it be not made turbid by our contact with the world, so that it will not reflect objects.[1] What other liberty is there worth having, if we have not freedom and peace in our minds, — if our inmost and most private man is but a sour and turbid pool? Often we are so jarred by chagrins in dealing with the world, that we cannot reflect. Everything beautiful impresses us as sufficient to itself. Many

[1] [Channing, p. 87.]

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men who have had much intercourse with the world and not borne the trial well affect me as all resistance, all bur and rind, without any gentleman, or tender and innocent core left. They have become hedgehogs.

Ah! the world is too much with us, and our whole soul is stained by what it works in, like the dyer's hand. A man had better starve at once than lose his innocence in the process of getting his bread. This is the pool of Bethsaida [*sic*] which must be stilled and become smooth before we can enter to be healed. If within the old man there is not a young man, — within the sophisticated, one unsophisticated, — then he is but one of the devil's angels.

It is surprising how any reminiscence of a different season of the year affects us. When I meet with any such in my Journal, it affects me as poetry, and I appreciate that other season and that particular phenomenon more than at the time. The world so seen is all one spring, and full of beauty. You only need to make a faithful record of an average summer day's experience and summer mood, and read it in the winter, and it will carry you back to more than that summer day alone could show. Only the rarest flower, the purest melody, of the season thus comes down to us.

P. M. — To Cliffs.

As I go up the back road, some fresh sprouts in bloom on a tall rough goldenrod. I hear a faint twittering of the sparrows in the grass, like crickets. Those flitting sparrows which we have had for some weeks, are they not the sober snowbirds (tree sparrows?)? They fly in a great drifting flock, wheeling and dash-

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ing about, as if preluding or acting a snow-storm, with rapid *te te te.* They are as dry and rustling as the grass. The *Aster puniceus*, with the *longifolius*, — a few, — on the sheltered sides of ditches. Checkerberries have now a fine, clear, fresh tint, a peculiar pink (?). Now leaves are off, or chiefly off, I begin to notice the buds of various form and color and more or less conspicuous, prepared for another season, — partly, too, perhaps, for food for birds. The tupelo is bare. The smooth speedwell in bloom, the meek-eyed flower, low or flat in the sod.

Went through the dense maple swamp against Potter's pasture. It is completely bare, and the ground is very thickly strewn with leaves, which conceal the wet places. But still the high blueberry bushes in the midst and on the edge retain a few bright-red or scarlet-red leaves. Red circles of the pitcher-plant, in the meadow beyond, are full of water to where cut evenly off by the scythe. Lambkill, being an evergreen, is now more conspicuous.

The river has risen still higher than yesterday, and flooded the meadows yet more. How long it continues to rise, before we feel the full influence of the rain that fell on the Worcester hills! The green-briar is bare except a few yellow leaves. Butter-and-eggs just ending in a sheltered place. Some *Solidago nemoralis* show still bright-yellow masses of flowers on bare, dead-looking stalks, the leaves having fallen or being dried up, — a constant lover of the sun. A storm appears to be thickening. The sun has been shorn of his beams all the afternoon. The clouds are not

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distinct and handsome. It is cool, gray weather. But yet there is a little more adventure in a walk, and it better suits a pensive mood. I see the hole of the great black spider already walled about. Slate-colored snowbirds. This has been the month for acorns, — and the last half of September, — though it is now too late.

When, after feeling dissatisfied with my life, I aspire to something better, am more scrupulous, more reserved and continent, as if expecting somewhat, suddenly I find myself full of life as a nut of meat, — am overflowing with a quiet, genial mirthfulness. I think to myself, I must attend to my diet; I must get up earlier and take a morning walk; I must have done with luxuries and devote myself to my muse. So I dam up my stream, and my waters gather to a head. I am freighted with thought.

[At this point and scattered through the pages immediately succeeding, the Journal contains further matter relating to the Maine excursion of the previous month. Only the parts not included in "The Maine Woods" are here printed.]

Very small and narrow intervals on the Penobscot. Every lake and stream in the wilderness is soon made to feel the influence of the white man's dam.

At Oldtown I went on board the small river steamers which run to the Five Islands, built propeller-fashion. They lay just opposite Orono Island; had been laid up during the low stage of water, and were to start the next day on their first trip. One was properly named

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the Governor Neptune. A hand told me that they drew only fourteen inches of water and could run easily in two feet of water, though they did not like to.

Why is [it] that we look upon the Indian as the man of the woods? There are races half civilized, and barbarous even, that dwell in towns, but the Indians we associate in our minds with the wilderness.

Oct. 27. 6.30 A. M. — To Island by boat.

The river still rises, — more than ever last night, owing to the rain of the 24th (which ceased in the night of the 24th). It is two feet higher than then. I hear a blackbird in the air; and these, methinks, are song sparrows flitting about, with the three spots on breast. Now it is time to look out for walnuts, last and hardest crop of the year?

I love to be reminded of that universal and eternal spring when the minute crimson-starred female flowers of the hazel are peeping forth on the hillsides, — when Nature revives in all her pores.

Some less obvious and commonly unobserved signs of the progress of the seasons interest me most, like the loose, dangling catkins of the hop-hornbeam or of the black or yellow birch. I can recall distinctly to my mind the image of these things, and that time in which they flourished is glorious as if it were before the fall of man. I see all nature for the time under this aspect. These features are particularly prominent; as if the first object I saw on approaching this planet in the spring was the catkins of the hop-hornbeam on

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the hillsides. As I sailed by, I saw the yellowish waving sprays.

See nowadays concave chocolate-colored fungi passing into dust on the edges, close on the ground in pastures.

Oct. 28. Rain in the night and this morning, preparing for winter.

We noticed in a great many places the narrow paths by which the moose came down to the river, and sometimes, where the bank was steep and somewhat clayey, they had slid down it. The holes made by their feet in the soft bottom in shallow water are visible for a long time. Joe told me that, though they shed their horns annually, each new pair has an additional prong. They are sometimes used as an ornament in front entries, for a hat-tree (to hang hats on).

Cedar bark appeared to be their commonest string.

. . . . . .

These first beginnings of commerce on a lake in the wilderness are very interesting, — these larger white birds that come to keep company with the gulls, — if they only carry a few cords of wood across the lake.

. . . . . .

Just saw in the garden, in the drizzling rain, little sparrow-sized birds flitting about amid the dry cornstalks and the weeds, — one, quite slaty with black streaks and a bright-yellow crown and rump, which I think is the yellow-crowned warbler, but most of the others much more brown, with yellowish breasts

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and no yellow on crown to be observed, which I think the young of the same. One flew up fifteen feet and caught an insect. They uttered a faint *chip*. Some of the rest were sparrows. I did not get good sight of the last. I suspect the former may be my *tull-lulls* of the Moosehead Carry.[1]

For a year or two past, my *publisher*, falsely so called, has been writing from time to time to ask what disposition should be made of the copies of "A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers" still on hand, and at last suggesting that he had use for the room they occupied in his cellar. So I had them all sent to me here, and they have arrived to-day by express, filling the man's wagon, — 706 copies out of an edition of 1000 which I bought of Munroe four years ago and have been ever since paying for, and have not quite paid for yet. The wares are sent to me at last, and I have an opportunity to examine my purchase. They are something more substantial than fame, as my back knows, which has borne them up two flights of stairs to a place similar to that to which they trace their origin. Of the remaining two hundred and ninety and odd, seventy-five were given away, the rest sold. I have now a library of nearly nine hundred volumes, over seven hundred of which I wrote myself. Is it not well that the author should behold the fruits of his labor? My works are piled up on one side of my chamber half as high as my head, my *opera omnia*. This is authorship; these are the work of my brain. There was just one piece of good luck in the venture. The

[1] No, they were [*sic*].

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unbound were tied up by the printer four years ago in stout paper wrappers, and inscribed, —

H. D. Thoreau's
Concord River
50 cops.

So Munroe had only to cross out "River" and write "Mass." and deliver them to the expressman at once. I can see now what I write for, the result of my labors.

Nevertheless, in spite of this result, sitting beside the inert mass of my works, I take up my pen to-night to record what thought or experience I may have had, with as much satisfaction as ever. Indeed, I believe that this result is more inspiring and better for me than if a thousand had bought my wares. It affects my privacy less and leaves me freer.[1]

Oct. 30. *Sunday.* A white frost this morning, lasting late into the day. This has settled the accounts of many plants which lingered still.

P. M. — To Hubbard's Meadow Wood.

I see tree sparrows in loose flocks, chasing one another, on the alders and willows by the brook-side. They keep up a general low and incessant twittering warble, as if suppressed, very sweet at this season, but not heard far. It is, as Wilson says, *like* a chip-bird, but this has a spot commonly on breast and a bright-chestnut crown. It is quite striped (bay and brown with dark) above and has a forked tail. I am not quite *sure* that I have seen them before. They are a chubby little bird, and have not the stripes on the

[1] [Channing, p. 84.]

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breasts which the song sparrow has. The last, moreover, has not that striped bay and blackish and ash above. By the bathing-place, I see a song sparrow with his full striped breast. He drops stealthily behind the wall and skulks amid the bushes; now sits behind a post, and peeps round at me, ever restless and quirking his tail, and now and then uttering a faint *chip*. It is not so light beneath as the last.

The muskrat-houses are mostly covered with water now.

Saw a *Solidago nemoralis* in full flower yesterday. Here is the autumnal dandelion and fragrant everlasting[1] to-day.

What with the rains and frosts and winds, the leaves have fairly fallen now. You may say the fall has ended. Those which still hang on the trees are withered and dry. I am surprised at the change since last Sunday. Looking at the distant woods, I perceive that there is no yellow nor scarlet there now. They are (except the evergreens) a mere dull, dry red. The autumnal tints are gone. What life remains is merely at the foot of the leaf-stalk. The woods have for the most part acquired their winter aspect, and coarse, rustling, light-colored withered grasses skirt the river and the wood-side. This is November. The landscape prepared for winter, without snow. When the forest and fields put on their sober winter hue, we begin to look more to the sunset for color and variety.

Now, now is the time to look at the buds [of] the swamp-pink,—some yellowish, some, mixed with their

[1] [Two interrogation-points in pencil here.]

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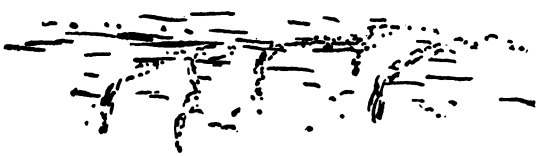
oblong seed-vessels, red, etc. The larger red maple buds have now two sets of scales, three in each. The water andromeda is still green. Along the Depot Brook, the great heads of *Aster puniceus* stand dry and fuzzy and singularly white, — like the goldenrods and other asters, — but some quite low are still green and in flower.

The prevalence of this light, dry color perhaps characterizes November, — that of bleaching withered grass, of the fuzzy gray goldenrods, harmonizing with the cold sunlight, and that of the leaves which still hang on deciduous trees.

The dead-looking fruit of the alders is now conspicuous.

Oct. 31. 7 A. M. — By river to Nawshawtuct.

Owing to the rain of the 28th, added to that of the 23d, the river has risen now probably more than three feet above where it was a week ago, yet wider over the meadows. Just at the edge, where it is mixed with grass and leaves, it is stiffened slightly this morning. On the hill, I see flocks of robins, flitting from tree to tree and peeping. It is a clear, cool, Novemberish morning, reminding me of those peculiarly pleasant mornings in winter when there is a slight vapor in the atmosphere. The same without snow or ice. There is a fine vapor, twice as high as a house, over the flooded meadows, through which I see the whiter dense smoke



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columns or streaks from the chimneys of the village, a cheerful scene. Methinks I see, far away toward the woods, a frozen mist (?) suspended against their sides.

What was that very heavy or thick, though not *very* large, hawk that sailed away from a hickory? The hemlock seeds are apparently ready to drop from their cones. The cones are mostly open. Now appears to be the very time for walnuts. I knock down showers with a stick, but all do not come out of the shells.

I believe I have not bathed since Cattle-Show. It has been rather too cold, and I have had a cold withal.

P. M. — By boat with Sophia to my grapes laid down in front of Fair Haven.

It is a beautiful, warm and calm Indian-summer afternoon. The river is so high over the meadows, and the pads and other low weeds so deeply buried, and the water is so smooth and glassy withal, that I am reminded of a calm April day during the freshets. The coarse withered grass, and the willows, and button-bushes with their myriad balls, and whatever else stands on the brink, are reflected with wonderful distinctness. This shore, thus seen from the boat, is like the ornamented frame of a mirror. The button-balls, etc., are more distinct in the reflection, if I remember, because they have there for background the reflected sky, but the actual ones are seen against the russet meadow. I even see houses a mile off, distinctly reflected in the meadow flood. The cocks crow in barn-yards as if with new lustiness. They seem to appreciate the day. The river is three feet and more

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above the summer level. I see many pickerel dart away, as I push my boat over the meadows. They lie up there now, and fishing is over, except spearing. You can no longer stand on the true banks to fish, and the fish are too widely dispersed over the grassy-bottomed and shallow meadow. The flood and wind have washed up great quantities of cranberries loosened by the rake, which now line the shore, mixed with the wrecked grass and weeds. We gathered five quarts, partly frost-bitten. There are already myriads of snow-fleas on the water next the shore, and on the cranberries we pick in the wreck, as if they were peppered. When we ripple the surface, the undulating light is reflected from the waves upon the bank and bushes and withered grass. Is not this already November, when the yellow and scarlet tints are gone from the forest?

It is very pleasant to float along over the smooth meadow, where every weed and each stem of coarse grass that rises above the surface has another, answering to it and even more distinct, in the water beneath, making a rhyme to it, so that the most irregular form appears regular. A few scattered dry and clean (very light straw-colored) grasses are so cheap and simple a beauty thus reflected. I see this especially on Potter's meadow. The bright hips of the meadow rose, which we brush against with our boat, — for with sallows and button-bushes it forms islands, — are handsomer thus seen than a closer inspection proves.

Tansy lingers still by Hubbard's Bridge. But methinks the flowers are disappearing earlier this season than last.

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I slowly discover that this is a gossamer day. I first see the fine lines stretching from one weed or grass stem or rush to another, sometimes seven or eight feet distant, horizontally and only four or five inches above the water. When I look further, I find that they are everywhere and on everything, sometimes forming conspicuous fine white gossamer webs on the heads of grasses, or suggesting an Indian bat. They are so abundant that they seem to have been suddenly produced in the atmosphere by some chemistry, — spun out of air, — I know not for what purpose. I remember that in Kirby and Spence it is not allowed that the spider can walk on the water to carry his web across from rush to rush, but here I see myriads of spiders on the water, making some kind of progress, and one at least with a line attached to him. True they do not appear to walk well, but they stand up high and dry on the tips of their toes, and are blown along quite fast. They are of various sizes and colors, though mostly a greenish-brown or else black; some very small. These gossamer lines are not visible unless between you and the sun. We pass some black willows, now of course quite leafless, and when they are between us and the sun they are so completely covered with these fine cobwebs or lines, mainly parallel to one another, that they make one solid woof, a misty woof, against the sun. They are not drawn taut, but curved downward in the middle, like the rigging of vessels, — the ropes which stretch from mast to mast, — as if the fleets of a thousand Lilliputian nations were collected one behind another under

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bare poles. But when we have floated a few feet further, and thrown the willow out of the sun's range, not a thread can be seen on it.

I landed and walked up and down the causeway and found it the same there, the gossamer reaching across the causeway, though not necessarily supported on the other side. They streamed southward with the slight zephyr. As if the year were weaving her shroud out of light. It seemed only necessary that the insect have a *point d'appui;* and then, wherever you stood and brought the leeward side of its resting-place between you and the sun, this magic appeared. They were streaming in like manner southward from the railing of the bridge, parallel waving threads of light, producing a sort of flashing in the air. You saw five or six feet in length from one position, but when I moved one side I saw as much more, and found that a great many, at least, reached quite across the bridge from side to side, though it was mere accident whether they caught there, — though they were continually broken by unconscious travellers. Most, indeed, were slanted slightly upward, rising about one foot in going four, and, in like manner, they were streaming from the south rail over the water, I know not how far. And there were the spiders on the rail that produced them, similar to those on the water. Fifteen rods off, up the road, beyond the bridge, they looked like a shimmering in the air in the bare tree-tops, the finest, thinnest gossamer veil to the sun, a dim wall.

I am at a loss to say what purpose they serve, and am inclined to think that they are to some extent

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attached to objects as they float through the atmosphere; for I noticed, before I had gone far, that my grape-vines in a basket in the boat had got similar lines stretching from one twig to another, a foot or two, having undoubtedly caught them as we paddled along. It might well be an electric phenomenon. The air appeared crowded with them. It was a wonder they did not get into the mouth and nostrils, or that we did not feel them on our faces, or continually going and coming amid them did not whiten our clothes more. And yet one with his back to the sun, walking the other way, would observe nothing of all this. Only stand so as to bring the south side of any tree, bush, fence, or other object between you and the sun. Methinks it is only on these very finest days late in autumn that this phenomenon is seen, as if that fine vapor of the morning were spun into these webs.

According to Kirby and Spence, "in Germany these flights of gossamer appear so constantly in autumn that they are there metaphorically called 'Der fliegende Sommer' (the flying or departing summer)." What can possess these spiders thus to run all at once to every the least elevation, and let off this wonderful stream? Harris tells me he does not know what it means. Sophia thought that thus at last they emptied themselves and wound up, or, I suggested, unwound, themselves, — cast off their mortal coil. It looks like a mere frolic spending and wasting of themselves, of their vigor, now that there is no further use for it, their prey, perchance, being killed or banished by the frost.

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IX

NOVEMBER, 1853

(ÆT. 36)

Nov. 1. 6.30 A. M. — To Hubbard's Bridge to see the gossamer.

As I go up the back road (the sun rises about this hour), I am struck with [the] general stillness as far as birds are concerned. There is now no loud, cheerful effervescing with song as in the spring. Most are gone. I only hear some crows toward the woods. The road and ruts are all frosted and stiff, and the grass and clover leaves. At Swamp Bridge, I see crystals of ice six feet long, like very narrow and sharp spears, or like great window-sashes without glass between them, floating on the water. I see yarrow, autumnal dandelion, and I suppose that is turnip so freshly in flower in Hubbard's field. Now that the sun is fairly risen, I see and hear a flock of larks in Wheeler's meadow on left of the Corner road, singing exactly as in spring and twittering also, but rather faintly or suppressedly, as if their throats had grown up or their courage were less. The white birch seeds *begin* to fall and leave the core bare. I now hear a robin, and see and hear some noisy and restless jays, and a song sparrow chips faintly; and here on the willows is a little warbler (?), with a narrow, sharp bill and a forked tail, uttering a dry chip from time to time, and, I suspect,

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picking up those little spiders which I saw yesterday, which spin this gossamer.

The gossamer does not show well against this sun. There is none now streaming from the bridge or across the causeway after this frosty night; only that which was firmly fastened and comparatively short remains still on the trees and bushes. The railing is covered with frost, and I see no spiders out. Plainly the best hour to observe this phenomenon is mid-afternoon or later, when the spiders are full of activity and the sun is in the most favorable position.

But yesterday, on the willows, it was a woof, without warp, of the finest conceivable texture, as it were made to strain the air and light, — catch all the grossness of the declining year and leave us the clear, strained November air, — fall-strained. I saw no insects caught in it. As if every prominence in every twig were connected with corresponding ones in every other by a fine line, entangling the rays of light, really catching and reflecting the light alone for all prey that I could see. Or is it a despairing effort? Now that the air is so cool and clear and free of insects, what possesses these little creatures to toil and spin so? Thus Nature gathers up her trail, and finely concludes. One six feet long, and invisible but in one position, in that was seen to stream or wave and flap a foot up and down while the light flashed along it, like a ribbon blown by the wind. You could even take hold of the end and hold it still. And the number of them was beyond conception. No industry is vain, and this must have a reason. It must be a perfect day that allows of so

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fine a display. Any rain or a high wind and, I suspect, whatever makes a disagreeable day, would hinder it.

As I return, I notice crows flying southwesterly in a very long straggling flock, of which I see probably neither end. A small flock of red-wings singing as in spring.

P. M. — Went after pink azaleas and walnuts by boat.

Saw three of those birds (of which I saw one first on the 30th October) on the water's edge on the meadow, like the telltale. They must be either sandpipers, telltales (not the greater or lesser), or plovers (?). Or may they be the turnstone? They went off each time with a chuckling, not whistling, note. A rise of the river like this brings us new birds at once, apparently from the seaside. This locality is somewhat peculiar in this respect, that when our broad meadows are flooded, several new species of birds are added to our ordinary list. They are not so large as the other tattler I see, nor as a woodcock, quite.

It is a pleasant day but breezy, and now I can hardly detect any gossamer left on the willows. This wind, perchance, shaking the willows and the reeds, — shaking and bending their masts, — strains and breaks this fine cordage, and, moreover, the spiders cannot well walk on the surface of the water now. So, it would seem, it must not only be a perfectly fair Indian-summer day, but quite calm and the water smooth, to permit of this wonderful display, and, perchance, after one of those remarkable and memorable mornings when the air is peculiarly clear and resonant and that white

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vapor as of frost-steam hangs over the earth, — after a clear, cool, calm Indian-summer morning in November. And must it not always follow the fall of the leaf, when there is least motion to the twigs? The short time in which it must be produced, and for which it endures, is remarkable.

As I paddle under the Leaning Hemlocks, the breeze rustles the boughs, and showers of their fresh winged seeds come wafted down to the water and are carried round and onward in the great eddy there.

Gathered five or six quarts of walnuts, — pignuts, — partly by clubbing the trees, thinking they might furnish entertainment some evening the coming winter. Not more than half are out of the shells, but it is pleasant shelling them to have one's fingers scented with their fine aroma. The red squirrel reproves the while. It is not true, *as I noticed to-day*, that squirrels never gnaw an imperfect and worthless nut. Many years ago I came here nutting with some boys who came to school to me; one of them climbed daringly to the top of a tall walnut to shake. He had got the nickname of Buster for similar exploits, so that some thought he was christened so. It was a true Indian name, earned for once.

A striped squirrel out yet.

While getting the azaleas, I notice the shad-bush conspicuously leafing out. Those long, narrow, pointed buds, prepared for next spring, have anticipated their time. I noticed something similar when surveying the Hunt woodlot last winter. Remember in this connection

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that at one period last spring this bud appeared the most forward.

About three weeks ago my indignation was roused by hearing that one of my townsmen, notorious for meanness, was endeavoring to get and keep a premium of four dollars which a poor Irish laborer whom he hired had gained by fifteen minutes' spading at our Agricultural Fair. To-night a free colored woman is lodging at our house, whose errand to the North is to get money to buy her husband, who is a slave to one Moore in Norfolk, Virginia. She persuaded Moore, though not a kind master, to buy him that he might not be sold further South. Moore paid six hundred dollars for him, but asks her eight hundred. My most natural reflection was that he was even meaner than my townsman. As mean as a slaveholder!

Nov. 2. What is Nature unless there is an eventful human life passing within her? Many joys and many sorrows are the lights and shadows in which she shows most beautiful.

P. M. — To Walden and Flint's.

What are those sparrows in loose flocks which I have seen two or three weeks, — some this afternoon on the railroad causeway, — with small heads and rather long necks in proportion to body, which is longish and slender, yellowish-white or olivaceous breast, striped with dark, ashy sides of neck, whitish over and beneath the eye, and some white observed in tail when they fly? I think a dark bill and legs. They utter a peculiar note, not heard here at other seasons, *somewhat* like

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the linarias, a sort of shuffling or chuckling *tche-tche-tche-tche*, quickly uttered. Can they be the grass-bird? They resemble it in marking. They are much larger than the tree sparrows. Methinks it [is] a very common fall bird.[1]

C. says he saw succory yesterday, and a loon on the pond the 30th *ult.* The prinos berries are almost gone. I am somewhat surprised to find that the *Aster undulatus* at Walden is killed by the frost; only one low and obscure one has any flowers left. Therefore, though it is the latest aster that is abundant, I am not sure that it lasts absolutely longer than the *A. puniceus*, or even *Tradescanti*. I see no other flowers on the Peak. Poke berries there are still partly green, partly ripe, as usual. The leaves of the umbelled pyrola are as glossy as in the spring, which proves that they do not owe their glossiness in the spring to the influence of that season. Two ducks on Walden. The Canada snapdragon is still fresh and in flower by roadside near pond, and a sprig from root of *Solidago nemoralis*.

I gather some fine large pignuts by the wall (near the beech trees) on Baker's land. It is just the time to get these, and this seems to be quite early enough for most pignuts. I find that there have been plenty of beechnuts, and there are still some empty burs on the trees and many nuts on the ground, but I cannot find one with meat in it. The beech leaves have all fallen except some about the lower part of the trees, and they make a fine thick bed on the ground. They are very beautiful, firm, and perfect leaves, unspotted

[1] [Titlarks, perhaps.]

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and not eaten by insects, of a handsome, clear leather-color, like a book bound in calf. Crisp and elastic; no wonder they make beds of them. Of a clear [space left in manuscript] or leather-color, more or less dark and remarkably free from stains and imperfections. They cover the ground so perfectly and cleanly as to tempt you to recline on it and admire the beauty of their smooth boles from that position, covered with lichens of various colors — green, etc. — which you think you never see elsewhere. They impress you as full of health and vigor, so that their bark can hardly contain their spirits but lies in folds or wrinkles about their ankles like a sock, with the embonpoint of infancy, wrinkles of fat.[1]

The pollen [*sic*] of the *Lycopodium dendroideum* falls in showers or in clouds when my foot strikes it. How long? The witch-hazel appears to be nearly out of bloom, *most* of the flowers withering or frost-bitten. The shrub oak cups which I notice to-day have lost their acorns. I examined a squirrel's nest in a tree which suggested to me (it having a foundation of twigs, coarse basketwork; above, shreds or fibres of bark and a few leaves) that *perchance* the squirrel, like the mouse, sometimes used a deserted bird's nest, — a crow's or hawk's. A red-tailed hawk.

Among the buds, etc., etc., to be noticed now, remember the alder and birch catkins, so large and conspicuous, — on the alder, pretty red catkins dangling in bunches of three or four, — the minute red buds of the panicled andromeda, the roundish plump ones

[1] [Channing, p. 290.]

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of the common hazel, the longish sharp ones of the witch-hazel, etc.

The sun sets. We come home in the autumn twilight, which lasts long and is remarkably light, the air being purer, — clear white light, which penetrates the woods, — is seen through the woods, — the leaves being gone. When the sun is set, there is no sudden contrast, no deep darkening, but a clear, strong white light still prevails, and the west finally glows with a generally diffused and moderate saffron-golden (?). Coming home by boat the other evening, I smelled a traveller's pipe very strongly a third of a mile distant. He was crossing Wood's Bridge. The evening star is now very bright; and is that Jupiter near it?

I might put by themselves the November flowers, — flowers which survive severe frosts and the fall of the leaf. I see hedge-mustard very fresh.

Those plants which are earliest in the spring have already made the most conspicuous preparation for that season. The skunk-cabbage spathes have started, the alder catkins, as I have said, hazel, etc.; and is there anything in the double scales of the maples, the prominent scales of willow and other catkins, sometimes burst (?)? A part of the lambkill is turned dull-reddish.

The last two, this and yesterday, fine days, but not gossamer ones.

Nov. 3. 6.30 A. M. — To Swamp Bridge Brook by river.

Considerable thin mist, high as two houses.

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Just as the sun is rising, many undoubtedly of the same white-in-tail sparrows described four pages back are flying high over my head west and northwest, above the thin mist, perchance to where they see the sun on the wood-side; with that peculiar shelly note. I think it was the 27th October I saw a goldfinch. There are two or three tree sparrows flitting and hopping along amid the alders and willows, with their fine silvery *tchip*, unlike the dry loud chip of the song sparrow.

The *Aster puniceus* by brook is still common, though the worse for the wear, — low and more recent ones, — so that this, though a week ago it was less prevalent, must be set down as later than the *A. undulatus*. It bears the frosts *much* better, though it has been exposed to more severe ones from its position. And with this must be included that smooth and narrower-leaved kind, in other respects the same, one of which, at least, I think I have called *A. longifolius*. They seem to run into each other. I am inclined to think it a smoother *A. longifolius*.

Now is the time to observe the radical leaves of many plants, which put forth with springlike vigor and are so unlike the others with which we are familiar that it is sometimes difficult to identify them. What is that large circular green and reddish one, flat in the grass of upland which I have seen for a fortnight? [1]

I love to see a man occasionally from whom the usnea

[1] It is the great primrose. There are none (but by chance) about the base of this year's stalks, *i. e.* perhaps unless there is an offshoot.

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will hang as naturally as from a spruce. Cultivation exterminates the pine, but preserves the elm. Our front-yard evergreens are puny and trimmed up.

Heard a bluebird about a week ago.

There are very few phenomena which can be described indifferently as occurring at different seasons of the year, for they will occur with some essential difference.

P. M. — To Ministerial Swamp.

A warm westerly wind, the sky concealed and a storm gathering. A sober, cloudy afternoon. To-day I see yarrow, very bright; red clover; autumnal dandelion; the silvery potentilla, and one *Canadensis* and the *Norvegica;* and a dandelion; *Veronica arvensis;* and gnawel; one *Aster lævis* (!) by the Hosmer Ditch; and, to my surprise, that solidago of September 11th, still showing some fresh yellow petals and a very fresh stem and leaves. It must be later than the *speciosa*, and this makes me doubt if it can be the *stricta*. It has a very angled stem and erect narrow pyramidal corymb. Also *S. nemoralis* by roadside. This, though it was not so prevalent as the *S. cæsia* three weeks ago, is still to be seen, while I have not seen the other for some days. It may outlast it, as the *A. puniceus* does the *A. undulatus*, though, by the way, I saw a very fresh *A. undulatus* this afternoon. I hear a few crickets and locusts (?) and see a very small brown beetle. The thistle radical leaves and fragrant everlasting not to be forgotten. Perhaps I have made the everlastings too late! A small gyrinus in Nut Meadow Brook.

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Since the change and fall of the leaf a remarkable prominence is given to the evergreens; their limits are more distinctly defined as you look at distant woods, since the leaves of deciduous trees ceased to be green and fell. Very small pollywogs in pools, one and a half or two inches long. I see many white pine cones fallen and open, with a few seeds still in them. The cones of the spruce are nearly empty, hanging downward;[1] those of the larch are also open, but, being upright, appear to have a few more seeds in them.

I make it my business to extract from Nature whatever nutriment she can furnish me, though at the risk of endless iteration. (I milk the sky and the earth.)

The potamogeton seeds in Nut Meadow Brook have partly left the stem.

I hear the sound of the woodchopper's axe.

Nov. 4. P. M. — To Hubbard's Close.

I find no traces of the fringed gentian there, so that in low meadows I suspect it does not last very late. Hear a nuthatch. The fertile catkins of the yellow birch appear to be in the same state with those of the white, and their scales are also shaped like birds, but much larger. The great osmundas in Hubbard's Swamp have universally lost their leafets, except perhaps one or two small crisped brown ones at the extremity, and the bare midribs alone are left. They look thin and Novemberish.

[1] Probably old ones.

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Nov. 5. P. M. — To Hubbard Bathing-Place for shrubs.

Most of the muskrat-cabins were lately covered by the flood, but now that it has gone down in a great measure, leaving the cranberries stranded amid the wreck of rushes, reeds, grass, etc., I notice that they have not been washed away or much injured, as a heap of manure would have been, they are so artificially constructed. Moreover, for the most part they are protected, as well as concealed, by the button-bushes, willows, or weeds about them. What exactly are they for? This is not their breeding season. I think that they are merely an artificial bank, an air-chamber near the water, houses of refuge. But why do they need them more at this season than in the summer, it may be asked. Perhaps they are constructed just before the rise of the water in the fall and winter, so that they may not have to swim so far as the flood would require in order to eat their clams.

I heard some pleasant notes from tree sparrows on the willows as I paddled by. The buds of the rhodora are among the more conspicuous now, and yet more its seed-vessels, many if not most of which are not yet dry, but purplish.

Nov. 6. *Sunday.* 2.30 P. M. — To Lee's Cliff.

I saw yesterday for a moment by the river a small olivaceous-yellow bird; possibly a goldfinch, but I think too yellow. I see *some* gossamer on the causeway this afternoon, though it is very windy; but it requires such a day as October 31st. It is remarkable how little

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we attend to what is passing before us constantly, unless our genius directs our attention that way. There are these little sparrows with white in tail, perhaps the prevailing bird of late, which have flitted before me so many falls and springs, and yet they have been as it were strangers to me, and I have not inquired whence they came or whither they were going, or what their habits were. It is surprising how little most of us are contented to know about the sparrows which drift about in the air before us just before the first snows. I hear the downy woodpecker's metallic *tchip* or peep. Now I see where many a bird builded last spring or summer. These are leaves which do not fall. How similar in the main the nests of birds and squirrels and mice! I am not absolutely certain that the mice do not make the whole nest in a bush sometimes, instead of building on a bird's nest. There is in the squirrel in this respect an approach to the bird, and, beside, one of his family is partially winged. Here, too, is a sort of link between quadrupeds and birds. I perceive that the starting of the amelanchier buds is a very common phenomenon, this fall at least, and when partially unfolded they are frost-bitten. See a few robins.

Climbed the wooded hill by Holden's spruce swamp and got a novel view of the river and Fair Haven Bay through the almost leafless woods. How much handsomer a river or lake such as ours, seen thus through a foreground of scattered or else partially leafless trees, though at a considerable distance this side of it, especially if the water is open, without wooded

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Fair Haven Bay through the Woods

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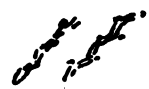
shores or isles! It is the most perfect and beautiful of all frames, which yet the sketcher is commonly careful to brush aside. I mean a pretty thick foreground, a view of the distant water through the near forest, through a thousand little vistas, as we are rushing toward the former, — that intimate mingling of wood and water which excites an expectation which the near and open view rarely realizes. We prefer that some part be concealed, which our imagination may navigate.

Still the Canada snapdragon, yarrow, autumnal dandelion, tansy, shepherd's-purse, silvery cinquefoil, witch-hazel. The sweet-briar hips are abundant and fresh, a dozen sometimes crowded in a space of two inches square. Their form is a handsome oval with a flat apex. Is it not somewhat like an olive-jar? The hips hold on, then, though the haws have fallen, and the prinos, too, for the most part. There are also *some* fragrant and green leaves left. These are about the prettiest red berries that we have.

Gathered some of those fine large mocker-nut (?) hickory nuts, which are now in their prime (*Carya tomentosa?*). I perceived a faint sweetness in the dry, crisp leaves on the ground (there were some also on the tree), and I perceive that Emerson speaks of their resinous-scented leaves.

The witch-hazel spray is peculiar and interesting, with little knubs at short intervals, zigzag, crinkle-crankle. How happens it? Did the leaves grow so close? The bud is  long against the stem, with a neck to it. The fever-bush

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has small roundish buds, two or three commonly together, probably the blossom-buds. The rhodora buds are purplish, as well as the not yet dry seed-vessels, smaller but *somewhat* like the swamp-pink. The alternate cornel, small, very dark reddish buds, on forking, smooth, slender twigs at long intervals. The panicled andromeda, minute pointed red buds, hugging the curving stems. The plump, roundish, club-shaped, well-protected buds of the alders, and rich purplish or mulberry catkins, three, four, or five together. The red maple buds, showing three or more sets of scales. The remarkable roundish, plump red buds of the high

blueberry. The four-sided, long (five eighths of an inch), spear-head-shaped buds of the *Viburnum Lentago*, at the end of forked twigs, probably blossom-buds, with minute leaf-buds lower on sides of twigs. Some sallow buds already burst their scales and show the woolly catkins, reddish at base. Little brownish, scale-like buds on the ends of the red cedar leaves or leafets (branchlets), probably male blossom-buds. The creeping juniper berries are yet green, with three white, swelling lips at apex and very minute buds in the axils of the leaves.

I am struck with the variety in the form and size of the walnuts in shells, — some with a slight neck and slightly club-shaped perhaps the most common; some much longer, nearly twice as long as wide; some, like the mocker-nut, slightly depressed or rather flattened above; some pignuts very large and regularly obovate, an inch and a quarter in diameter.

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A sweet-briar hip; but most are more regular jar-shape.

Nov. 7. 6.15 A. M. — To Cliffs.

A clear, cold, as well as frosty, morning. I have to walk with my hands in my pockets. Hear a faint chip, probably from a tree sparrow, which I do not see in the garden.

I find the cistus or frostweed, abundantly surrounded with crystals by the Spring Path. How long? And also by the wall this side the orchard on Fair Haven the ground is spotted with it, — like little pouches [?] or fingers full of purest white cotton, tucked about the bases of their stems. These crystals are low in the withered grass, close to the ground, and fast attached to the stems, as if they grew so. They extend about an inch upward, and are from one half to one inch wide. I saw them on no other plants, and not on all the cistuses. Those which had them had their bark invariably split up a short distance at the base and thrown off, as if forced up by the frost, and the crystals were close beneath this, adhering both to stem and bark. The others were sound in this respect. It appeared as if they were a vapor which had curled up from the root and clung about the stem in the night, frozen as it ascended, — shell-like, dimpled crystals, the frozen shells of vaporous whirlpools in the air. The stems were dead, with their seed-vessels and seeds still atop, though perhaps there was a little moisture or sap in them close to the ground; and directly beneath in the earth was a little reddish-green shoot, already started, ready to

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burst up in the spring. Oftenest it appeared as if two curls of vapor from different sides of the stem had united and frozen together at their extremities, forming little white, sugar-like horns, open upward and downward, or the crystals had the appearance of the bark of the willow-herb, cracked about the base of the stem. A section looking thus: These were very beautiful on close inspection, like the finest imaginable white silk or glass, floss-like, of the finest staple, or like asbestos of a very fine and loose grain. It is not a particularly frosty morning. Whence does this vapor come from? The cistus has thus not only its second flowering, but its third frost flowering. Will it form again about the same stem, the bark being rent? It is a sort of incense offering in behalf of the young shoot ready to spring.

The notes of one or two small birds, this cold morning, in the now comparatively leafless woods, sound like a nail dropped on an anvil, or a glass pendant tinkling against its neighbor.

The sun now rises far southward. I see westward the earliest sunlight on the reddish oak leaves and the pines. The former appear to get more than their share. How soon the sun gets above the hills, as if he would accomplish his whole diurnal journey in a few hours at this rate! But it is a long way round, and these are nothing to the hill of heaven. Whether we are idle or industrious, the sun is constantly travelling through the sky, consuming arc after arc of this great circle at this same rapid pace.

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Nightshade berries still in water or over it. Great straggling flocks of crows still flying westerly.

P. M. — To Conantum by boat, nutting.

October 31st, when the river was at its height after the rains of the 24th and 28th, our first fall flood, the wreck of the river and meadow with an unusual quantity of cranberries was washed up, and is now left high and dry, forming the first water-mark of the season, an endless meandering light-brown line, further from or nearer to the river. It is now very fresh, and it is comparatively easy to distinguish the materials which compose it. But I love to see it even in midsummer, the old water-line of the last year, far away from the edge of the shrunken stream, in some meadow, perchance in the woods, reminding me of the floods and the windy days of the fall and spring, of ducks and geese and gulls, of the raw and gusty days which I have spent on the then wilderness of water, of the origin of things, as it were, when water was a prevailing element. The flood comes and takes all the summer's waste, all that lies loose, from the riverside and meadows and floats it, not to ocean, but as far toward the upland as the water reaches; there it plants again and again the seeds of fluviatile shrubs and trees and flowers. A new line of wreckage is formed every year. I looked this afternoon to see what it was composed of. Where I looked the most prominent part was different lengths of a large three-sided cellular reed (?), perchance the *Sparganium ramosum* (?),[1] for

[1] Though Gray says its leaves are one to two feet high, I saw some

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the most part faded, but some still a little juicy, pieces of rushes and eel-grass, and cranberry leaves which the rake has torn off with cranberries, I believe some flags, wool-grass and various sedges, pads, potamogeton, water ranunculus, and various other weeds of the riverside and meadows, the radical leaves (?) of heart-leaf very delicate and transparent (but this is more conspicuous, at least, still floating in water along the edge); and there was a quantity of what looked like the stems of buttonwood leaves, which I now suspect were polygonum stems. There was not much, if any, pontederia where I looked, for that, though long dead, still holds to the bottom. More of this in other places, however; also small flat shells?[1]

I perceive, when I look, that some of the most enduring of the river weeds are the *Polygonum hydropiperoides* (one still in bloom), which stand withered still above the flood, and also wool-grass, and the *Scirpus lacustris* and *Juncus militaris*, both curved downward. But in other places, less open, there is an abundance of sere meadow-grasses standing. The seeds of the sweet flag are now coming off by degrees, like coarse chaff.

Under the warm south side of Bittern Cliff, where I moor my boat, I hear one cricket singing loudly and undauntedly still, in the warm rock-side.

I shook two mocker-nut trees; one just ready to drop its nuts, and most came out of the shells. But the other tree was not ready; only a part fell, and those mostly

of *this*, still greenish, in the water where I keep my boat, six feet high! It lasts longer than flags, which it resembles.

[1] *Vide* Nov. 8.

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in the shells. This is the time for *our* best walnuts; the smallest, say the last of October. Got a peck and a half shelled. I did not wish to slight any of Nature's gifts. I am partial to the peculiar and wholesome sweetness of a nut, and I think that some time is profitably spent every autumn in gathering even such as our pignuts. Some of them are a very sizable, rich-looking, and palatable fruit. How can we expect to understand Nature unless we accept like children these her smallest gifts, valuing them more as her gifts than for their intrinsic value? I love to get my basket full, however small and comparatively worthless the nut. It takes very severe frosts, and sun and wind thereafter, to kill and open the shells so that the nuts will drop out. Many hold on all winter. I climbed to the tops of the trees, and then found that shaking would not do, only jarring the limbs with my feet. It is remarkable how these nuts are protected, some with an outer shell about a quarter of an inch thick, and an inner nearly as thick as the other, and when cracked open the meat is still hard to extract. I noticed, however, that the nuts on one tree, the second, notwithstanding these thick shells, were now full of fine cracks, as if, now that they were ripe, they had made themselves ready to be cracked by man or squirrels or the frost. They really crack much easier. It is a hard, tough tree, whose fruit is stones, fit to have been the food of man in the iron age. (I should like to see a man whose diet was berries and nuts alone.) Yet I would not rob the squirrels, who, before any man, are the true owners. I am pretty sure I heard a striped

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squirrel in the wall near me, as if he blowed a short blast on a dry leaf. They will not be in a hurry to go into winter quarters until they have laid up some of these nuts.

The shallow pools in woods were skimmed over this morning, and there was a little ice along the river-side, which can still be detected at sundown. Three bluebirds still braving the cold winds, — Acton Blues, not gone into winter quarters. Their blue uniform makes me think of soldiers who have received orders to keep the field and not go into winter quarters.

A muskrat-house on the top of a rock, too thin round the sides for a passage beneath, yet a small cavity at top, which makes me think that they use them merely as a sheltered perch above water. They seize thus many cores to build on, as a hummock left by the ice. (Red clover.) The wads of which this muskrat-house was composed were about six inches by four, rounded and massed at one end, flaking off at the other, and were composed chiefly of a *little* green (for the most part withered dark-brown) moss-like weed, and had the strong odor of the fresh-water sponge and conferva.

Nov. 8. Mayweed and shepherd's-purse.

10 A. M. — Our first snow, the wind southerly, the air chilly and moist; a very fine snow, looking like a mist toward the woods or horizon, which at 2 o'clock has not whitened the ground. The children greet it with a shout when they come out at recess.

P. M. — To riverside as far down as near Peter's,

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to look at the water-line before the snow covers it. By Merrick's pasture it is mainly a fine, still more or less green, thread-like weed or grass of the river bottom (?), sedges, utricularias (that coarse one especially, whose name I am not sure of, with tassels (?)),[1] yellow water ranunculus, potamogeton's translucent leaves, a few flags and pontederia stems. By Peter's there was much of that coarse triangular cellular stem mentioned yesterday as sparganium (?). I would not have thought it so common. There is not so much meadow grass or hay as I expected, for that has been raked and carried off. The pads, too, have wasted away and the pontederias' leaves, and the stems of the last for the most part still adhere to the bottom.

Three larks rise from the sere grass on Minott's Hill before me, the white of their outer tail-feathers very conspicuous, reminding me of arctic snowbirds by their size and form also. The snow begins to whiten the plowed ground now, but it has not overcome the russet of the grass ground. Birds generally wear the russet dress of nature at this season. They have their fall no less than the plants; the bright tints depart from their foliage or feathers, and they flit past like withered leaves in rustling flocks. The sparrow is a withered leaf.[2]

The *Stellaria media* still blooms in Cheney's garden, and the shepherd's[-purse] looks even fresher. This must be near the end of the flower season. Perchance I heard the last cricket of the season yesterday. They chirp here and there at longer and longer intervals, till

[1] *Utricularia vulgaris?* [2] [Channing, p. 105.]

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the snow quenches their song. And the last striped squirrel, too, perchance, yesterday. They, then, do not go into winter quarters till the ground is covered with snow.

The partridges go off with a whir, and then sail a long way level and low through the woods with that impetus they have got, displaying their neat forms perfectly.

The yellow larch leaves still hold on, — later than those of any of our pines.

I noticed the other day a great tangled and netted mass of an old white pine root lying upon the surface, nearly a rod across and two feet or more high, too large even to be turned up for a fence. It suggested that the roots of trees would be an interesting study. There are the small thickly interwoven roots of the swamp white oaks on the Assabet.

At evening the snow turned to rain, and the sugaring soon disappeared.

Nov. 9. High wind and rain in the night. Still more strong and gusty but remarkably warm southwest wind during the day.

P. M. — To Fair Haven Hill by boat with W. E. C.

We rowed against a very powerful wind, sometimes scarcely making any headway. It was with difficulty often that we moved our paddles through the air for a new stroke. As C. said, it seemed to blow out of a hole. We had to turn our oars edgewise to it. But we worked our way slowly upward, nevertheless, for we came to feel and hear it blow and see the waves

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run. There was quite a sea running on the lee shore, — broad black waves with white crests, which made our boat toss very pleasantly. They wet the piers of the railroad bridge for eighteen inches up. I should guess that the whole height from the valley between to the top of a wave was nearer fifteen inches.

The muskrats have added a new story to their houses since the last flood which covered them; I mean that of October 31st and thereabouts. They are uncommonly high, methinks, full four feet by five or more in diameter, a heaping ox-cart load. There are at least eight such within half a mile from Clamshell Hill to Hubbard's Wood. It is remarkable how little effect the waves have on them, while a heap of manure or a haycock would be washed away or undermined at once. I opened one. It was composed of coarse grass, pontederia stems, etc., etc., not altogether in mouthfuls. This was three feet and a half above water, others quite four. After taking off a foot I came to the chamber. It was a regularly formed oval or elliptical chamber, about eighteen inches the longest way and seven or eight inches deep, shaped like a pebble, with smooth walls of the weeds, and bottomed or bedded with a very little drier grass, a mere coating of it. It would hold four or five, closely packed. The entrance, eight or nine inches wide, led directly from this to the water at an angle of 45°, and in the water there I saw some green and white stub ends of pontederia (?) stems, I think, looking like flagroot. That thick wall, a foot quite or more above and eighteen inches or two feet around, being of these damp mate-

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rials, soon freezes and makes a tight and warm house. The walls are of such [thickness at] the bottom that the water in the gallery probably never freezes. If the height of these houses is any sign of high or low water, this winter it will be uncommonly high.

Soon after, we saw a mink swimming in the agitated water close to the shore, east side, above Nut Meadow Brook. It showed the whole top of the back and part of the tail, unlike the muskrat, and did not dive. Stopped a moment when we headed toward it, and held up its head at the end of its long neck toward us, reminding me of pictures of the otter, then turned and swam and ran the other way; dark-brown. We see no birds, unless one crow; the wind is too strong for them. I must know what that tall, coarse grass is which stands withered so abundantly amid the button-bushes all along the shore. It escapes the mower by its position. The water milkweed stands withered amid the button-bushes, the pods still erect, though open and empty.

Landed and walked over Conant's Indian rye-field, and I picked up two good arrowheads. The river with its waves has a very wild look southward, and I see the white caps of the waves in Fair Haven Bay. Went into the woods by Holden Swamp and sat down to hear the wind roar amid the tree-tops. What an incessant straining of the trees! It is a music that wears better than the opera, methinks. This reminds me how the telegraph-wire hummed coarsely in the tempest as we passed under it.

Hitherto it had only rained a little from time to time, but now it began suddenly in earnest. We hastily

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rowed across to the firm ground of Fair Haven Hill-side, drew up our boat and turned it over in a twinkling on to a clump of alders covered with cat-briars which kept up the lee side, and crawled under it. There we lay half an hour on the damp ground and cat-briars, hardly able to see out to the storm which we heard on our roof, through the thick alder stems, much pleased with the tightness of our roof, which we frequently remarked upon. We took immense satisfaction in the thoroughness of the protection against the rain which it afforded. Remembered that such was the origin of the Numidian architecture and, as some think, of the nave (ship) in Gothic architecture, and if we had had a dry bed beneath us, and an ugly gap under the windward side of the boat through [which] the wind drew had been stopped, we should have lain there longer. At length, as it threatened to be an all-night storm, we crawled out again and set sail homeward.

It now began to rain harder than ever, and the wind was so strong and gusty, and blew so nearly at right angles with the river, that we found it impossible to keep the stream long at a time with our sail set, sitting on one side till the water came in plentifully, that the side might act as a keel, but were repeatedly driven ashore amid the button-bushes, and then had to work our way to the other side slowly and start again. What with water in the boat and in our clothes, we were now indifferent to wet. At length it began to rain so much harder than before, the great drops seeming to flat down the waves and suppress the wind, and feeling like hail on our hands and faces, that, as we remembered, it

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had only sprinkled before. By this time of course we were wet quite through and through, and C. began to inquire and jest about the condition of our money — a singular prudence methought — and buried his wallet in his pocket-handkerchief and returned it to his pocket again. He thought that bank-bills would be spoiled. It had never occurred to me if a man got completely wet through how it might affect the bank-bills in his wallet, it is so rare a thing for me to have any there. At length we both took to rowing vigorously to keep ourselves warm, and so got home just after candlelight.

Nov. 11. 7 A. M. — To Hubbard Bathing-Place.

A fine, calm, frosty morning, a resonant and clear air except a slight white vapor which escaped being frozen or perchance is the steam of the melting frost. Bracing cold, and exhilarating sunlight on russet and frosty fields. I wear mittens now. Apples are frozen on the trees and rattle like stones in my pocket. *Aster puniceus* left. A little feathery frost on the dead weeds and grasses, especially about water, — springs and brooks (though now slightly frozen), — where was some vapor in the night. I notice also this little frostwork about the mouth of a woodchuck's hole, where, perhaps, was a warm, moist breath from the interior, perchance from the chuck!

9 A. M. — To Fair Haven Pond by boat.

The morning is so calm and pleasant, winter-like, that I must spend the forenoon abroad. The river

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is smooth as polished silver. A little ice has formed along the shore in shallow bays five or six rods wide. It is for the most part of crystals imperfectly united, shaped like birds' tracks, and breaks with a pleasant crisp sound when it feels the undulations produced by my boat. I hear a linaria-like mew from some birds that fly over. Some muskrat-houses have received a slight addition in the night. The one I opened day before yesterday has been covered again, though not yet raised so high as before. The hips of the late rose still show abundantly along the shore, and in one place nightshade berries. I hear a faint cricket (or locust?) still, even after the slight snow. I hear the cawing of crows toward the distant wood through the clear, echoing, resonant air, and the lowing of cattle. It is rare that the water is smooth in the forenoon. It is now as smooth as in a summer evening or a September or October afternoon. There is frost on all the weeds that rise above the water or ice. The *Polygonum Hydropiper* is the most conspicuous, abundant, and enduring of those in the water. I see the spire of one white with frost-crystals, a perfect imitation at a little distance of its loose and narrow spike of white flowers, that have withered. I have noticed no turtles since October 31st, and no frogs for a still longer time. At the bathing[-place] I looked for clams, in summer almost as thick as paving-stones there, and found none. They have probably removed into deeper water and into the mud (?). When did they move?

The jays are seen and heard more of late, their plumage apparently not dimmed at all.

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I counted nineteen muskrat-cabins between Hubbard Bathing-Place and Hubbard's further wood, this side the Hollowell place, from two to four feet high. They thus help materially to raise and form the river-bank. I opened one by the Hubbard Bridge. The floor of chamber was two feet or more beneath the top and one foot above the water. It was quite warm from the recent presence of the inhabitants. I heard the peculiar plunge of one close by. The instant one has put his eyes noiselessly above water he plunges like a flash, showing tail, and with a very loud sound, the first notice you have of his proximity, — that he has been there, — as loud as if he had struck a solid substance. This had a sort of double bed, the whole about two feet long by one foot wide and seven or eight inches high, floored thinly with dry meadow-grass. There were in the water green butts and roots of the pontederia, which I think they eat. I find the roots gnawed off. Do they eat flagroot? A good deal of a small green hypnum-like river-weed forms the mouthfuls in their masonry. It makes a good sponge to mop the boat with.

The wind has risen and sky overcast. I stop at Lee's Cliff, and there is a *Veronica serpyllifolia* out. Sail back. Scared up two small ducks, perhaps teal. I had not seen any of late. They have probably almost all gone south.

Nov. 12. I cannot but regard it as a kindness in those who have the steering of me that, by the want of pecuniary wealth, I have been nailed down to this

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my native region so long and steadily, and made to study and love this spot of earth more and more. What would signify in comparison a thin and diffused love and knowledge of the whole earth instead, got by wandering? The traveller's is but a barren and comfortless condition. Wealth will not buy a man a home in nature, — house nor farm there. The man of business does not by his business earn a residence in nature, but is denaturalized rather. What is a farm, house and land, office or shop, but a settlement in nature under the most favorable conditions? It is insignificant, and a merely negative good fortune, to be provided with thick garments against cold and wet, an unprofitable, weak, and defensive condition, compared with being able to extract some exhilaration, some warmth even, out of cold and wet themselves, and to clothe them with our sympathy. The rich man buys woollens and furs, and sits naked and shivering still in spirit, besieged by cold and wet. But the poor Lord of Creation, cold and wet he makes to warm him, and be his garments.

Tansy is very fresh still in some places. Tasted to-day a black walnut, a spherical and corrugated nut with a large meat, but of a strong oily taste.

8 P. M. — Up river to Hubbard Bathing-Place.

Moon nearly full. A mild, almost summer evening after a very warm day, alternately clear and overcast. The meadows, with perhaps a little mist on them, look as if covered with frost in the moonlight. At first it is quite calm, and I see only where a slight wave or piece of wet driftwood along the shore reflects a

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flash of light, suggesting that we have come to a season of clearer air. This occasional slight sparkling on either hand along the water's edge attends me. I come out now on the water to see our little river broad and stately as the Merrimack or still larger tides, for though the shore be but a rod off, the meeting of land and water being concealed, it is as good as if a quarter of a mile distant, and the near bank is like a distant hill. There is now and of late months no smell of muskrats, which is probably confined to the spring or rutting season. While the sense of seeing is partly slumbering, that of hearing is more wide awake than by day, and, now that the wind is rising, I hear distinctly the chopping of every little wave under the bow of my boat. Hear no bird, only the loud plunge of a muskrat from time to time. The moon is wading slowly through broad squadrons of clouds, with a small coppery halo, and now she comes forth triumphant and burnishes the water far and wide, and makes the reflections more distinct. Trees stand bare against the sky again. This the first month in which they do. I hear one cricket singing still, faintly deep in the bank,[1] now after one whitening of snow. His theme is life immortal. The last cricket, full of cheer and faith, piping to himself, as the last man might. The dark squadrons of hostile clouds have now swept over the face of the moon, and she appears unharmed and riding triumphant in her chariot. Suddenly they dwindle and melt away in her mild and all-pervading light, dissipated like the mists of

[1] Was it not a frog?

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the morning. They pass away and are forgotten like bad dreams.

Landed at the bathing-place. There is no sound of a frog from all these waters and meadows which a few months ago resounded so with them; not even a cricket or the sound of a mosquito. I can fancy that I hear the sound of peeping hylodes ringing in my ear, but it is all fancy. How short their year! How early they sleep! Nature is desert and iron-bound; she has shut her door. How different from the muggy nights of summer, teeming with life! That resounding life is now buried in the mud, returned into Nature's womb, and most of the birds have retreated to the warm belt of the earth. Yet still from time to time a pickerel darts away. And still the heavens are unchanged; the same starry geometry looks down on their active and their torpid state. And the first frog that puts his eye forth from the mud next spring shall see the same everlasting starry eyes ready to play at bo-peep with him, for they do not go into the mud.

However, you shall find the muskrats lively enough now at night, though by day their cabins appear like deserted cabins. When I paddle near one, I hear the sudden plunge of one of its inhabitants, and sometimes see two or three at once swimming about it. Now is their day. It is remarkable that these peculiarly aboriginal and wild animals, whose nests are perhaps the largest of any creatures' hereabouts, should still so abound in the very midst of civilization and erect their large and conspicuous cabins at the foot of our gardens. However, I notice that unless there is a strip

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of meadow and water on the garden side they erect their houses on the wild side of the stream.

The hylodes, as it is the first frog heard in the spring, so it is the last in the autumn. I heard it last, methinks, about a month ago. I do not remember any hum of insects for a long time, though I heard a cricket to-day.

Nov. 13. Rain all day.

Nov. 14. Methinks I have not seen any of those white-in-tail birds for a week (?); but I see a little sparrow or two to-day, maybe a song sparrow? Mallows still in bloom, and hedge-mustard.

P. M. — To Annursnack and Cedar Swamp.

There is a clear air and a strong northwest wind drying up the washed earth after the heavy rain of yesterday. The road looks smooth and white as if washed and swept. It is surprising how rapidly our sandy soil dries up. We walk dry-shod the day after a rain which raises the river three feet. I am struck by the dark blue of the agitated river.

Saw yarrow apparently just opened and tansy still fresh, but the fringed gentian in P. Barrett's meadow has long since withered. It falls before the first severe frosts. It is remarkable how short a career it has, in our meadows at least. Its stem and leaves never conspicuous, it is not to be detected at all, perhaps, before the middle of September, and by about the middle of October with us it has already succumbed to the frosts. It came very near not being an inhabitant

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of our latitude, perhaps our globe, at all. The witch-hazel lasts much longer. However, I have seen it in November on a high hillside in Weston. When the flower season is over, when the great company of flower-seekers have ceased their search, this just raises its blue face above the withering grass beside the brooks for a moment, having at the eleventh hour made up its mind to join this planet's floral exhibition.[1]

I climb Annursnack. Under this strong wind more dry oak leaves are rattling down. All winter is their fall. A distinction is to be made between those trees whose leaves fall as soon as the bright autumnal tints are gone and they are withered and those whose leaves are rustling and falling all winter even into spring.

October is the month of painted leaves, of ripe leaves, when all the earth, not merely flowers, but fruits and leaves, are ripe. With respect to its colors and its season, it is the sunset month of the year, when the earth is painted like the sunset sky. This rich glow flashes round the world. This light fades into the clear, white, leafless twilight of November, and whatever more glowing sunset or Indian summer we have then is the afterglow of the year.[2] In October the man is ripe even to his stalk and leaves; he is pervaded by his genius, when all the forest is a universal harvest, whether he possesses the enduring color of the pines, which it takes two years to ripen and wither, or the brilliant color of the deciduous trees, which fade the first fall.

From this hill I am struck with the smoothness and

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 251; Riv. 307.] [2] [Channing, p. 105.]

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washed appearance of all the landscape. All these russet fields and swells look as if the withered grass had been combed by the flowing water. Not merely the sandy roads, but the fields are swept. All waters — the rivers and ponds and swollen brooks — and many new ones are now seen through the leafless trees — are blue as indigo, reservoirs of dark indigo amid the general russet and reddish-brown and gray.[1]

October answers to that period in the life of man when he is no longer dependent on his transient moods, when all his experience ripens into wisdom, but every root, branch, leaf of him glows with maturity. What he has been and done in his spring and summer appears. He bears his fruit.

Now for the bare branches of the oak woods, where hawks have nested and owls perched, the sinews of the trees, and the brattling (?) of the wind in their midst. For, now their leaves are off, they 've bared their arms, thrown off their coats, and, in the attitude of fencers, await the onset of the wind, to box or wrestle with it. Such high winds would have done much harm six weeks ago.

The top of Annursnack has been burned, and sown with winter rye, and the green blade contrasts with the black ground there. It is the most conspicuous radical leaf.

Went through the white cedar swamp. There are white cedars, larch (now bare), spruce, etc.; cedars two feet through, the only ones I know in Concord. It was here were cut the cedar posts which Alcott

[1] [Channing, p. 108.]

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put into Emerson's summer-house. They could not be spared even for that. It is a stout tree here, tapering with singular abruptness. Its small flattish leaves, dispersed crosswise and at other or different angles with each other, give it a peculiarly light, fantastic look. Myriads of little ones are springing in the more open parts of the swamp. They are turned a reddish green now. The large trees have a very rough bark, regularly furrowed perpendicularly, and a bright-yellow resin between the furrows. I find that the inner bark makes a good lye. Is this used by the Indians? Methinks these are flower-buds which are formed at the ends of the leafets and will open early in the spring. This swamp must be visited in midsummer. You see great shelf-shaped fungi, handsomely buttressed and perfectly horizontal, on the under side of slanting dead trees, at different stages one above another. Do lichens or fungi grow on you? Sometimes the one side of a man is pasture for fungi while the other is clothed with lichens, he being partially rotten.

Our arbor-vitæ cones are full of broadly winged seeds.

6.30 P. M. — To Baker Farm by boat.

It is full moon, and a clear night, with a strong northwest wind; so C. and I must have a sail by moonlight. The river has risen surprisingly, to a spring height, owing to yesterday's rain, higher than before since spring. We sail rapidly upward. The river apparently, almost actually, as broad as the Hudson. Venus remarkably bright, just ready to set. Not a cloud in

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the sky, only the moon and a few faint unobtrusive stars here and there, and from time to time a meteor. The water washes against our bows with the same sound that one hears against a vessel's prow by night on the ocean. If you had waked up here, you would not know at first but you were there. The shore-lines are concealed; you look seemingly over an almost boundless waste of waters on either hand. The hills are dark, vast, lumpish. Some near, familiar hill appears as a distant bold mountain, for its base is indefinitely removed. It is very pleasant to make our way thus rapidly but mysteriously over the black waves, black as ink and dotted with round foam-spots with a long moonlight sheen on one side — to make one's way upward thus over the waste of waters, not knowing where you are exactly, only avoiding shores. The stars are few and faint in this bright light. How well they wear! C. thought a man could still get along with *them* who was considerably reduced in his circumstances, that they were a kind of bread and cheese that never failed.[1] Fair Haven Hill never looked more grand and mountain-like than now that all its side is dark and we only see its bold outline at an indefinite distance. Under the lee of the Holden wood we found unexpectedly smooth and pleasant water and stillness, where we heard the wind roar behind us. The night is cool but not damp, and methinks you can be abroad with more impunity than in summer nights even. The walls on Conantum are merely black streaks, inky lines running over the hill.

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 328; Riv. 403, 404.]

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The wind goes down somewhat. The features of the landscape are simpler and lumped. We have the moon with a few stars above, a waste of black, dashing waves around, reflecting the moon's sheen on one side, and the distant shore in dark swelling masses, dark floating isles between the water and the sky, on either hand. Moored our boat under Fair Haven Hill.

The light is so strong that colors of objects are not much changed from the day. The water seen from the hill is still blue, and the fields are russet.

How can we omit to go forth on the water these windy days and nights, to be tossed by the waves? It is some such novelty to a landsman as an earthquake. To take the hand of Nature and be shaken. Heard one cricket to-night.

Nov. 15. P. M. — To Fair Haven Hill and by boat to witch-hazel bush.

Were they not the white-in-tail birds I saw this afternoon? Cricket still. After yesterday's clear, windy weather we have to-day less wind and much haze. It is Indian-summer-like. The river has risen yet higher than last night, so that I cut across Hubbard's meadow with ease. Took up a witch-hazel with still some fresh blossoms; also a barberry bush. What appeared to be the minute fibrous roots of the last covered one side of a rock thickly like a piece of rotten flannel. How conspicuous its bright-yellow roots in the soil!

The flood has covered most muskrat-cabins again. It has also reached and floated higher yet the last

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week. Just after sundown, though it had been windy before, the waters became suddenly smooth, and the clear yellow light of the western sky was handsomely reflected in the water, making it doubly light to me on the water, diffusing light from below as well as above.

Were those insects on the surface after the moon rose skaters or water-bugs?

After having some business dealings with men, I am occasionally chagrined, and feel as if I had done some wrong, and it is hard to forget the ugly circumstance. I see that such intercourse long continued would make one thoroughly prosaic, hard, and coarse. But the longest intercourse with Nature, though in her rudest moods, does not thus harden and make coarse. A hard, insensible man whom we liken to a rock is indeed much harder than a rock. From hard, coarse, insensible men with whom I have no sympathy, I go to commune with the rocks, whose hearts are comparatively soft.

I was the other night elected a curator of our Lyceum, but was obliged to decline, because I did not know where to find good lecturers enough to make a course for the winter. We commonly think that we cannot have a good journal in New England, because we have not enough writers of ability; but we do not suspect likewise that we have not good lecturers enough to make a Lyceum.

The tall wool-grass, with its stately heads, still stands above and is reflected in the smooth water.

Together with the barberry, I dug up a brake root by chance. This, too, should have gone into the witches'

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caldron. It is large and black, almost like a cinder without, and within curiously black and white in parallel fibres, with a sort of mildewiness as if it were rotting; yet fresh shoots are ready for the spring with a cottony point.

Goodwin says he killed a mink the other day on a small *white pine tree.* Some years ago, about this season, he dug out fifteen muskrats in one nest in the ground at Goose Pond. He says the white rabbit does not run to his hole, but the gray one does.

This evening at sundown, when I was on the water, I heard come booming up the river what I suppose was the sound of cannon fired in Lowell to celebrate the Whig victory, the voting down the new Constitution. Perchance no one else in Concord heard them, and it is remarkable that I heard them, who was only interested in the natural phenomenon of sound borne far over water. The river is now so full and so high over the meadows, and at that hour was so smooth withal, that perchance the waves of sound flowed over the smooth surface of the water with less obstruction and further than in any other direction.

I also noticed this afternoon that, before the water generally was smoothed, those parts of the inundated meadow where spires of grass rose thinly above the surface were already quite smooth and glossy, so effectually did they break and dissipate the wavelets. A multitude of fine grass stems were a sufficient breakwater to render the surface smooth.

This afternoon has wanted no condition to make it a gossamer day, it seems to me, but a calm atmos-

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phere. Plainly the spiders cannot be abroad on the water unless it is smooth. The one I witnessed this fall was at time of flood. May it be that they are driven out of their retreats like muskrats and snow-fleas, and spin these lines for their support? Yet they work on the causeway, too.

I see many cranberries on the vines at the bottom, making a great show. It might be worth the while, where possible, to flood a cranberry meadow as soon as they are ripe and before the frosts, and so preserve them plump and sound till spring.

Nov. 16. P. M. — To Nawshawtuct by boat with Sophia, up Assabet.

The river still higher than yesterday. I paddled straight from the boat's place to the Island. I now take notice of the green polypody on the rock and various other ferns, one the marginal (?) shield fern and one the terminal shield fern, and this other, here inserted, on the steep bank above the Hemlocks.

I admire the fine blue color of the cedar berries.

Nov. 17. I notice that many plants about this season of the year or earlier, after they have died down at top, put forth fresh and conspicuous radical leaves against another spring. So some human beings in the November of their days exhibit some fresh radical greenness, which, though the frosts may soon nip it, indicates and confirms their essential vitality. When their summer leaves have faded and fallen, they put forth fresh radical leaves which sustain the life in their

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root still, against a new spring. The dry fields have for a long time been spotted with the small radical leaves of the fragrant life-everlasting, not to mention the large primrose, johnswort, etc., etc. And almost every plant, although it may show no greenness above ground, if you dig about it, will be found to have fresh shoots already pointing upward and ready to burst forth in the spring.

Are not more birds crushed under the feet of oxen than of horses?

Nov. 18. Conchologists call those shells "which are fished up from the depths of the ocean" and are never seen on the shore, which are the rarest and most beautiful, *Pelagii*, but those which are cast on shore and are never so delicate and beautiful as the former, on account of exposure and abrasion, *Littorales*. So it is with the thoughts of poets: some are fresh from the deep sea, radiant with unimagined beauty, — *Pelagii;* but others are comparatively worn, having been tossed by many a tide, — *Littorales*, — scaled off, abraded, and eaten by worms.

Nov. 19. P. M. Up river in boat to Hubbard's meadow, cranberrying.

They redden all the lee shore, the water being still apparently at the same level with the 16th. This is a very pleasant and warm Indian-summer afternoon. Methinks we have not had one like it since October 31st. This, too, is a gossamer day, though it is not particularly calm. If it were, it would be still more

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perfect. My boat I find to be covered with spiders, whose fine lines soon stretch from side to side. Got a bushel and a half of cranberries, mixed with chaff.

Brought home one of those little shells found in the shore wreck, which look like a bugle-horn. I notice that at the bridges there is now a slight rapid, and the water is perceptibly several inches lower on the down-stream side, the piers acting as a dam, the stream being somewhat narrowed there withal by the abutments. What is the peculiarity of the Indian summer? From the 14th to the 21st October inclusive, this year, was perfect Indian summer; and this day the next? Methinks that any particularly pleasant and warmer weather after the middle of October is thus called. Has it not fine, calm spring days answering to it? Autumnal dandelion quite fresh. Tansy very fresh yesterday.

Nov. 20. 7.30 A. M. — To Hubbard's meadow, cranberrying.

Still quite warm as yesterday. I wear no greatcoat. There has been no freezing in the night. I hear a single hylodes in the wood by the water, while I am raking the cranberries. This warmth has aroused him. While raking, I disturbed two bullfrogs, one quite small. These, too, the warm weather has perhaps aroused. They appear rather stupid. Also I see one painted tortoise, but with no bright markings. Do they fade?

I observe on some muskrat-cabins much of that bleached and withered long grass, strewn as if preparatory to raising them, for almost all are covered

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with water now. It apparently is used as a binder. I find, washed up with the cranberries and also floating over the meadow and about the cabins, many fragments of a root, often with that green, somewhat pellucid, roundish pad attached. This appears to be the muskrats' principal vegetable food now. It is not flagroot, but either yellow lily, pontederia, white lily, — or can it be heart-leaf root?

The shore is so reddened with cranberries that I perceive them fifteen rods off, tingeing it. Many of them being frost-bitten, they have now the pleasant taste of spring cranberries, which many prefer. They, as well as the wreck generally, are covered, as if peppered, with the skipping snow-fleas. In the wreck I find also the common little trumpet-shaped cockle, and some caddis-worms out of their cases. There is an abundance of chaff, *i. e.* broken meadow-grass and cranberry leaves, in it now.

Minott said he heard geese going south at daybreak the 17th, before he came out of the house, and heard and saw another large flock at 10 A. M. Those I heard this afternoon were low and far in the western horizon. I did [not] distinctly see them, but heard them farther and farther in the southwest, the sound of one which did the honking guiding my eyes. I had seen that a storm was brewing before, and low mists already gathered in the northeast. It rained soon after I got home. The 18th was also a drizzling day. Methinks the geese are wont to go south just before a storm, and, in the spring, to go north just after one, say at the end of a long April storm.

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I have not seen any tree sparrows of late, nor white-in-tails. Would it not be worth the while to flood a cranberry meadow just before the frosts come, and so preserve them plump and fresh till spring?[1] I once came near speculating in cranberries. Being put to it to raise the wind to pay for "A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers," and having occasion to go to New York to peddle some pencils which I had made, as I passed through Boston I went to Quincy Market and inquired the price of cranberries. The dealers took me down cellar, asked if I wanted wet or dry, and showed me them. I gave them to understand that I might want an indefinite quantity. It made a slight sensation among them and for aught I know raised the price of the berry for a time. I then visited various New York packets and was told what would be the freight, on deck and in the hold, and one skipper was very anxious for my freight. When I got to New York, I again visited the markets as a purchaser, and "the best of Eastern Cranberries" were offered me by the barrel at a cheaper rate than I could buy them in Boston. I was obliged to manufacture a thousand dollars' worth of pencils and slowly dispose of and finally sacrifice them, in order to pay an assumed debt of a hundred dollars.

What enhances my interest in dew — I am thinking of the summer — is the fact that it is so distinct from rain, formed most abundantly after bright, starlit nights, a product especially of the clear, serene air. The manna of fair weather; the upper side of rain,

[1] [See p. 508.]

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as the country above the clouds. That nightly rain called dew, which gathers and falls in so low a stratum that our heads tower above it like mountains in an ordinary shower. It only consists with comparatively fair weather above our heads. Those warm volumes of air, forced high up the hillsides in summer nights, are driven thither to drop their dew there, like kine to their yards to be milked; that the moisture they hold may be condensed and so dew formed before morning on the tops of the hills. A writer in *Harper's Magazine* (vol. vii, page 505) says that the mist at evening does not rise, "but gradually forms higher up in the air." He calls it the moisture of the air become visible. Says there is most dew in clear nights, because clouds prevent the cooling down of the air; they radiate the heat of the earth back to it; and that a strong wind, by keeping the air in motion, prevents its heat from passing off. Therefore, I proceed, for a plentiful dew it must not only be clear but calm. The above writer says bad conductors of heat have always most dew on them, and that wool or swan's-down is "good for experimenting on the quantity of dew falling," — weight before and after. Thinks it not safe to walk in clear nights, especially after midnight, when the dew is most abundantly forming; better in cloudy nights, which are drier. Also thinks it not prudent to venture out until the sun begins to rise and warms the air. But methinks this prudence begets a tenderness that will catch more cold at noonday than the opposite hardiness at midnight.

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Nov. 21. *Monday.* A fine misty rain all night and to-day.

Raking so many cranberries has made me quite conversant with the materials of the river wreck. There are many middle-sized living black dor-bugs in it, as well as bugle-horn shells, as I find on washing out my cranberries in the kitchen to-day. I have got about two and a half bushels of clear cranberries, and added those of Saturday afternoon makes about three and a half. I find my best way of getting cranberries is to go forth in time of flood, just before the water begins to fall and after strong winds, and, choosing the thickest places, let one, with an instrument like a large coarse dung-fork, hold down the floating grass and other coarser part of the wreck mixed with [it], while another, with a common iron garden rake, rakes them into the boat, there being just enough chaff left to enable you to get them into the boat, yet with little water. When I got them home, I filled a half-bushel basket a quarter full and set it in a tub of water, and, stirring the cranberries, the coarser part of the chaff was held beneath by the berries rising to the top. Then, raising the basket, draining it, and upsetting it into a bread-trough, the main part of the chaff fell uppermost and was cast aside. Then, draining off the water, I jarred the cranberries alternately to this end and then to that of the trough, each time removing the fine chaff — cranberry leaves and bits of grass — which adhered to the bottom, on the principle of gold-washing, except that the gold was what was thrown away, and finally I spread and dried and win-

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nowed them. It would have been better if the basket had been a very coarse riddle and the trough had had a rough bottom.

The last two nights, at least, there has been no freezing.

Is not the dew but a humbler, gentler rain, the nightly rain, above which we raise our heads and unobstructedly behold the stars? The mountains are giants which tower above the rain, as we above the dew in the grass; it only wets their feet.

Nov. 22. Geese went over yesterday, and to-day also.

The drizzling rain of yesterday has not checked the fall of the river. It was raised by the rain of Sunday, the 13th, and began to fall the 20th.

P. M. — Up river by boat.

I think it must be the white lily root I find gnawed by the rats, though the leaves are pellucid. It has large roots with eyes and many smaller rootlets attached, white tinged with a bluish slate-color. The radical leaves appear to have started again. Turnip freshly in bloom in cultivated fields; knawel still; yarrow is particularly fresh and innocent; but I find no blossom on the *Arenaria serpyllifolia.*

If there is any one with whom we have a quarrel, it is most likely that that one makes some just demand on us which we disappoint.

I see still, here and there, a few deep-sunk yellow and decayed pads, the bleared, dulled, drowned eyes of summer.

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I was just thinking it would be fine to get a specimen leaf from each changing tree and shrub and plant in autumn, in September and October, when it had got its brightest characteristic color, the intermediate ripeness in its transition from the green to the russet or brown state, outline and copy its color exactly with paint in a book, — a book which should be a memorial of October, be entitled October Hues or Autumnal Tints. I remember especially the beautiful yellow of the *Populus grandidentata* and the tint of the scarlet maple. What a memento such a book would be, beginning with the earliest reddening of the leaves, woodbine and ivy, etc., etc., and the lake of radical leaves, down to the latest oaks![1] I might get the impression of their veins and outlines in the summer with lampblack, and after color them.

As I was returning down the river toward night, I mistook the creaking of a plow-wheel for a flock of blackbirds passing overhead, but it is too late for them. The farmers plow considerably this month. No doubt it destroys many grubs in the earth.

Nov. 23. 6 A. M. — To Swamp Bridge Brook mouth.

The cocks are the only birds I hear, but they are a host. They crow as freshly and bravely as ever, while poets go down the stream, degenerate into science and prose. I have not seen a flock of small birds, either tree sparrows or *F. hyemalis* or white-in-tails, etc., for about a fortnight. There is now no sound of early birds on the leafless trees and bushes — willows and

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 251; Riv. 307, 308.]

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alders — along this watercourse. The few that are left probably roost in the evergreen woods. Yet I hear, or seem to hear, the faintest possible lisp or creak from some sparrow, as if from a crack in the mist-clad earth, or some ox-yoke or distant wain. I suspect that the song sparrow lingers as late, here and there alone, as any migrating bird.

By 8 o'clock the misty clouds disperse, and it turns out a pleasant, calm, and springlike morning. The water, going down, but still spread far over the meadows, is seen from the window perfectly smooth and full of reflections. What lifts and lightens and makes heaven of the earth is the fact that you see the reflections of the humblest weeds against the sky, but you cannot put your head low enough to see the substance so. The reflection enchants us, just as an echo does.

If I would preserve my relation to nature, I must make my life more moral, more pure and innocent. The problem is as precise and simple as a mathematical one. I must not live loosely, but more and more continently.[1]

What an engineer this water is! It comes with its unerring level, and reveals all the inequalities of the meadow. The farmer may see now what route to take to get the driest and firmest ground for his hay-carts, how to cut his ditches, and where to drop more sand. It is an obvious piece of geometry in nature. Every peculiar curve in the limbs of the trees is doubly conspicuous seen both above and beneath, yet the

[1] [Channing, pp. 87, 88.]

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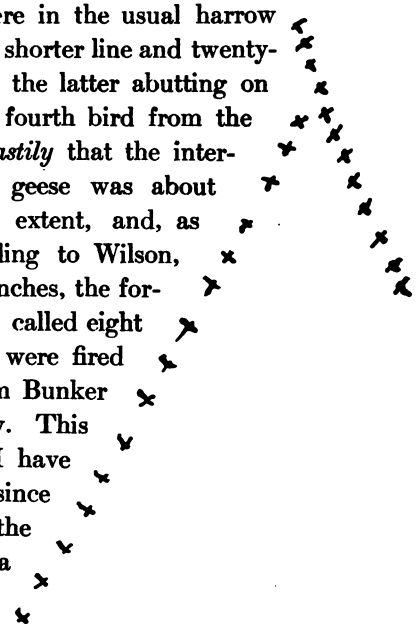
rhyme makes even what was odd, regular what was irregular. For a week or more there has been no freezing day or night. The springs and swamps are getting filled.

The Indian summer itself, said to be more remarkable in this country than elsewhere, no less than the reblossoming of certain flowers, the peep of the hylodes, and sometimes the faint warble of some birds, is the reminiscence, or rather the return, of spring, — the year renewing its youth.

At 5 P. M. I saw, flying southwest high overhead, a flock of geese, and heard the faint honking of one or two. They were in the usual harrow form, twelve in the shorter line and twenty-four in the longer, the latter abutting on the former at the fourth bird from the front. I judged *hastily* that the interval between the geese was about double their alar extent, and, as the last is, according to Wilson, five feet and two inches, the former may safely be called eight feet. I hear they were fired at with a rifle from Bunker Hill the other day. This is the sixth flock I have seen or heard of since the morning of the 17th, *i. e.* within a week.



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Nov. 24. At noon, after a drizzling forenoon, the weather suddenly changed to clear and wintry, freezing cold with strong wind from a northerly quarter. It seems like the beginning of winter. Ice forms in my boat at 5 P. M., and what was mud in the street is fast becoming a rigid roughness. This after more than a week of mild and much drizzly weather without frost, one or two of the fairest days being Indian-summerish.

Methinks we have had clear yellow sunsets and afterglows this month, like this to-night (not glowing red ones), with perhaps an inclination to blue and greenish clouds.

Nov. 25. Frost on the windows.

10 A. M. — To Cliffs.

A clear, cold, windy day. The water on the meadows, which are rapidly becoming bare, is skimmed over and reflects a whitish light, like silver plating, while the unfrozen river is a dark blue. In plowed fields I see the asbestos-like ice-crystals, more or less mixed with earth, frequently curled and curved like crisped locks, where the wet ground has frozen dry. By the spring under Fair Haven Hill, I see the frost about the cistus now at 11 A. M. in the sun. For some weeks I have heard occasionally the hounding of hounds, like a distant natural horn in the clear resonant air. Though the grass has but little life, even in its roots, cattle are still turned out more or less.

The landscape, seen from the side of the hill looking westward to the horizon through this clear and sparkling air, though simple to barrenness, is very

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handsome. There is first the clean light-reflecting russet earth, the dark-blue water, the dark or dingy green evergreens, the dull reddish-brown of young oaks and shrub oaks, the gray of maples and other leafless trees, and the white of birch stems. The mountains are remarkably distinct and appear near and elevated, but there is no snow on them. The white houses of the village, also, are remarkably distinct and bare and brought very near.

Going through the orchard, I saw two birds like jays and soon heard a whistle-like note of alarm, between a robin and a downy woodpecker. Perhaps it was a butcher-bird. A heavy-shouldered hawk sails over. A *Solidago nemoralis* with flowers still at root.

Just after the sun set to-night, I observed that the northern hemisphere of the heavens was covered with fleecy clouds, which abruptly terminated in a straight line, stretching east and west from one horizon to the other directly over my head, the western end being beautifully rose-tinted. Half an hour later this cloud had advanced southward, showing clear sky behind it in the north, until its southern edge was seen at an angle of 45° by [*sic*] me, but though its line was as straight as before, it now appeared regularly curved like a segment of a melon-rind, as usual.

Nov. 27. Now a man will eat his heart, if ever,[1] now while the earth is bare, barren and cheerless, and we have the coldness of winter without the variety of ice and snow; but methinks the variety and com-

[1] [See *Journal*, vol. iv, p. 405.]

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pensation are in the stars now. How bright they are now by contrast with the dark earth! The days are short enough now. The sun is already setting before I have reached the ordinary limit of my walk, but the 21st of next month the day will be shorter still by about twenty-five minutes. In December there will be less light than in any month in the year.

It is too cold to-day to use a paddle; the water freezes on the handle and numbs my fingers. I observe the *Lycopodium lucidulum* still of a fresh, shining green. Checkerberries and partridge-berries are both numerous and obvious now.

Nov. 28. *Monday.* Saw boys skating in Cambridgeport, — the first ice to bear. Settled with J. Munroe & Co., and on a new account placed twelve of my books with him on sale. I have paid him directly out of pocket since the book was published two hundred and ninety dollars and taken his receipt for it. This does not include postage on proof-sheets, etc., etc. I have received from other quarters about fifteen dollars. This has been the pecuniary value of the book. Saw at the Natural History rooms the skeleton of a moose with horns. The length of the spinal processes (?) over the shoulder was very great.[1] The hind legs were longer than the front, and the horns rose about two feet above the shoulders and spread between four and five, I judged.

Dr. Harris described to me his finding a species of cicindela at the White Mountains this fall (the same he had found there one specimen of some time ago),

[1] [*Maine Woods*, p. 127; Riv. 154.]

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supposed to be very rare, found at St. Peter's River and at Lake Superior; but he proves it to be common near the White Mountains.

Nov. 29. On Saturday, the 26th, a dog on whose collar the words "Milton Hill," or equivalent ones, were engraved ran through the town, having, as the story went, bitten a boy in Lincoln. He bit several dogs in this town and was finally shot. Some of the dogs bitten have been killed, and rumor now says that the boy died yesterday. People are considerably alarmed. Some years ago a boy in Lincoln was bitten by a raccoon and died of hydrophobia. I observed to Minott to-night that I did not think that our doctors knew how to cure this disease, but he said they could cure it, he had seen a man bitten who was cured. The story is worth telling, for it shows how much trouble the passage of one mad dog through the town may produce.

It was when he was a boy and lived down below the old Ben Prescott house, over the cellar-hole on what is now Hawthorne's land. The first he remembers a couple of men had got poles and were punching at a strange dog toward night under a barn in that neighborhood. The dog, which was speckled and not very large, would growl and bite the pole, and they ran a good deal of risk, but they did not know that he was mad. At length they routed him, and he took to the road and came on towards town, and Minott, keeping his distance, followed on behind. When the dog got to the old Ben Prescott place, he turned up into the

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yard, where there were a couple of turkeys, drove them into a corner, bit off the head of one, and carried the body off across the road into the meadow opposite. They then raised the cry of "Mad dog." He saw his mother and Aunt Prescott, two old ladies, coming down the road, while the dog was running the other way in the meadow, and he shouted to them to take care of themselves, for that dog was mad. The dog soon reëntered the road at some bars and held on toward town. Minott next saw Harry Hooper coming down the road after his cows, and he shouted to him to look out, for the dog was mad, but Harry, who was in the middle of the road, spread his arms out, one on each side, and, being short, the dog leaped right upon his open breast and made a pass at his throat, but missed it, though it frightened him a good deal; and Minott, coming up, exclaimed, "Why, you 're crazy, Harry; if he 'd 'a' bitten ye, 't would 'a' killed ye." When he got up as far as the red house or Curtis place, the dog was about in the middle of the road, and a large and stout old gentleman by the name of Fay, dressed in small-clothes, was coming down on the sidewalk. M. shouted to him also to take care of himself, for the dog was mad, and Fay said afterward that he heard him but he had always supposed that a mad dog would n't turn out for anything; but when this dog was nearly abreast of him, he suddenly inclined toward him, and then again inclined still more, and seized him by the left leg just below the knee, and Fay, giving him a kick with the other leg, tripped himself up; and when he was down, the dog bit him

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in the right leg in the same place. Being by this time well frightened, and fearing that he would spring at his throat next, Fay seized the dog himself by his throat and held him fast, and called lustily for somebody to come and kill him. A man by the name of Lewis rushed out of the red house with an old axe and began to tap on the dog's nose with it, but he was afraid to strike harder, for Fay told him not to hit him. Minott saw it all, but still kept his distance. Suddenly Fay, not knowing what he did, let go, and the man, giving the dog a blow across the back, ran into the house; but, it being a dull meat axe, the dog trotted along, still toward town.

He turned and went round the pond by Bowers's and, going down to the brook by the roadside, lapped some water. Just then, Peter coming over the bridge, the dog reared up and growled at him, and he, seeing that he was mad, made haste through the bars out of his way and cut across the fields to Reuben Brown's. The dog went on, it being now between sundown and dark, to Peter Wheeler's, and bit two cows, which afterward died of hydrophobia, and next he went to where Nathan Stow now lives, and bit a goose in the wing, and so he kept on through the town. The next that was heard of him, Black Cato, that lived at the Lee place, now Sam Wheeler's, on the river, was waked up about midnight by a noise among the pigs, and, having got up, he took a club and went out to see what was the matter. Looking over into the pen, this dog reared up at him, and he knocked him back into it, and, jumping over, mauled him till he thought he was dead

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and then tossed him out. In the morning he thought he [would] go out and see whose dog he had killed, but lo! he had picked himself up, and there was no dog to be found.

Cato was going out into the woods chopping that day, and as he was getting over a wall lined with brush, the same dog reared up at him once more, but this time, having heard of the mad dog, he was frightened and ran; but still the dog came on, and once or twice he knocked him aside with a large stone, till at length, the dog coming close to him, he gave him a blow which killed him; and lest he should run away again, he cut off his head and threw both head and body into the river.

In the meanwhile Fay went home (to the Dr. Heywood house), drank some spirit, then went straight over to Dr. Heywood's office and stayed there and was doctored by him for three weeks. The doctor cut out the mangled flesh and made various applications, and Fay cried like a baby, but he never experienced any further ill effects from the bite.

P. M. — To J. P. Brown's pond-hole.

J. Hosmer showed me a pestle which his son had found this summer while plowing on the plain between his house and the river. It has a rude bird's head, a hawk's or eagle's, the beak and eyes (the latter a mere prominence) serving for a knob or handle. It is affecting, as a work of art by a people who have left so few traces of themselves, a step beyond the common arrowhead and pestle and axe. Something more fanciful, a step beyond

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pure utility. As long as I find traces of works of convenience merely, however much skill they show, I am not so much affected as when I discover works which evince the exercise of fancy and taste, however rude. It is a great step to find a pestle whose handle is ornamented with a bird's-head knob. It brings the maker still nearer to the races which so ornament their umbrella and cane handles. I have, then, evidence in stone that men lived here who had fancies to be pleased, and in whom the first steps toward a complete culture were taken. It implies so many more thoughts such as I have. The arrowhead, too, suggests a bird, but a relation to it not in the least godlike. But here an Indian has patiently sat and fashioned a stone into the likeness of a bird, and added some pure beauty to that pure utility, and so far begun to leave behind him war, and even hunting, and to redeem himself from the savage state. In this he was leaving off to be savage. Enough of this would have saved him from extermination.

I dug for frogs at Heart-leaf Pond, but found none. The ice is two inches thick there, and already, the day being warm, is creased irregularly but agreeably on the upper surface. What is the law of these figures as on watered silks? Has it anything to do with the waves of the wind, or are they the outlines of the crystals as they originally shot, the bones of the ice? It would be worth the while to watch some water while freezing. What is that low yellowish, straw-colored sedge which is so dense in this pond now? I must look for frogs about springs, where Minott says he has dug them

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out. The andromeda leaves are a rich brown color now.

It has been cloudy and milder this afternoon, but now I begin to see, under the clouds in the west horizon, a clear crescent of yellowish sky, and suddenly a glorious yellow sunlight falls on all the eastern landscape — russet fields and hillsides, evergreens and rustling oaks and single leafless trees. In addition to the clearness of the air at this season, the light is all from one side, and, none being absorbed or dissipated in the heavens, but it being reflected both from the russet earth and the clouds, it is intensely bright, and all the limbs of a maple seen far eastward rising over a hill are wonderfully distinct and lit. I think that we have some such sunsets as this, and peculiar to the season, every year. I should call it the russet afterglow of the year. It may not be warm, but must be clear and comparatively calm. I see now large insects in the calm, sunlit air over the sprout-lands.

Cattle still abroad in the fields, though there is little to be got there. They say that young cattle can stand the cold and starvation best. If I am not mistaken, their coats have less sleekness than in the spring; they have a shaggy, frowzy, and nipped look, their hair standing on end, and the sorrel color seems to predominate. Their pastures look as barren of nutriment as their own backs.

Nov. 30. 8 A. M. — To river, to examine roots.

I rake up almost everywhere from the bottom of the river that very fresh and bright green ranunculus,

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the handsomely divided leaf. I ascertain this morning that that white root with eyes and slaty-tinged fibres and sharp leaves rolled up, found gnawed off and floating about muskrat-houses, is the root of the great yellow lily. The leaf-stalk is yellow, while that of the white lily is a downy or mildewy blue black. The yellow lily root is, then, a principal item, it would seem, in their vegetable diet. I find that those large triangular or rhomboidal or shell-shaped eyes or shoulders on this root are the bases of leaf-stalks which have rotted off, but toward the upper end of the root are still seen decaying. They are a sort of abutment on which the leaf-stalk rested, and the fine black dots on them are the bases of the fine threads or fibres of the leaf-stalk, which, in the still living leaf-stalk, are distinguished by their purple color. These eyes, like the leaves, of course, are arranged spirally around the roots in parallel rows, in quincunx order, so that four make a diamond figure. The slate-tinged fibres spring from the bare white intervals between the bases of the leaves. Closely packed between, and protected by the under leaf-stalk, I find already the tender club-shaped yellow flower-bud a quarter of an inch in diameter, with a stem two inches long and wider than the bud. I am surprised to find these roots, even within to the bases of the leaves about the buds, infested with white grubs nearly half an inch long and minute, threadlike reddish and speckled worms. Also on the fibres are transparent elliptical chrysalids, the color of a snail-shell, containing insects apparently just ready to fly.

The white lily roots are more enveloped in down

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and fibre, a dark-blue or blackish down. I raked up one dark-brown root somewhat like a white lily, except that it was smooth and the leaf-stalks were very slender and the leaf-buds minute. Perhaps it was the kalmiana lily. I raked up one live clam in deep water, and could feel them like stones on the bottom.

All these leaves are lightly rolled up in the form of arrowheads, as thus best prepared to pierce whatever obstacles the mud or water may present. There is a vast amount of decaying vegetable matter at the bottom of the river, and what I draw up on my rake emits a very offensive odor.

P. M. — Down river by boat and inland to the green house beyond Blood's.

A mild and summery afternoon with much russet light on the landscape.

I think it was a flock of low-warbling tree sparrows [1] which I saw amid the weeds beyond the monument, though they looked larger.

I am attracted nowadays by the various withered grasses and sedges, of different shades of straw-color and of various more or less graceful forms. That which I call fescue grass is quite interesting, gracefully bending to the zephyr, and many others are very perfect and pure. Wool-grass is one of the largest and most conspicuous. I observe it rising thinly above the water in which it is reflected, two or three feet, and all its narrow rustling leaves stream southeasterly from the stems, though it is now quite calm, proving the preva-

[1] Undoubtedly; also Dec. 3d.

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lence of northwesterly winds. An abundance of withered sedges and other coarse grasses, which in the summer you scarcely noticed, now cover the low grounds, — the granary of the winter birds. A very different end they serve from the flowers which decay so early. Their rigid culms enable them to withstand the blasts of winter. Though divested of color, fairly bleached, they are not in the least decayed but seasoned and living like the heart-wood.

Now, first since spring, I take notice of the cladonia lichens, which the cool fall rains appear to have started. The *Callitriche verna* is perfectly fresh and green, though frozen in, in the pools.

We are going across the Hunt and Mason pastures. The twigs of young cedars with apparently staminate buds have even a strawberry-like fragrance, and what a heavenly blue have the berries! — a peculiar light blue, whose bloom rubs off, contrasting with the green or purplish-brown leaves.

I do not know so fine a pine grove as that of Mason's. The young second-growth white pines are peculiarly soft, thick, and bushy there. They branch directly at the ground and almost horizontally, for the most part four or five large stems springing from the ground together, as if they had been broken down by cattle originally. But the result is a very dark and dense, almost impenetrable, but peculiarly soft and beautiful grove, which any gentleman might covet on his estate.

We returned by the bridle-road across the pastures. When I returned to town the other night by the Walden

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road through the meadows from Brister's Hill to the poorhouse, I fell to musing upon the origin of the meanders in the road; for when I looked straight before or behind me, my eye met the fences at a short distance, and it appeared that the road, instead of being built in a straight line across the meadows, as one might have expected, pursued a succession of curves like a cow-path. In fact, it was just such a meandering path as an eye of taste requires, and the landscape-gardener consciously aims to make, and the wonder is that a body of laborers left to themselves, without instruments or geometry, and perchance intending to make a straight road, — in short, that circumstances ordinarily, — will so commonly make just such a meandering road as the eye requires. A man advances in his walk somewhat as a river does, meanderingly, and such, too, is the progress of the race. The law that plants the rushes in waving lines along the edge of a pond, and that curves the pond-shore itself, incessantly beats against the straight fences and highways of men and makes them conform to the line of beauty which is most agreeable to the eye at last.

But to return to the walk of the day. Though there were some clouds in the west, there was a bright silver twilight before we reached our boat. C. remarked it descending into the hollows immediately after sunset. A red house could hardly be distinguished at a distance, but a white one appeared to reflect light on the landscape. At first we saw no redness in the sky, but only some peculiar dark wisp-like clouds in the west,

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but on rising a hill I saw a few red stains like veins of red quartz on a ground of feldspar.

The river was perfectly smooth except the upwelling of its tide, and as we paddled home westward, the dusky yellowing sky was all reflected in it, together with the dun-colored clouds and the trees, and there was more light in the water than in the sky. The reflections of the trees and bushes on the banks were wonderfully dark and distinct, for though frequently we could not see the real bush in the twilight against the dark bank, in the water it appeared against the sky. We were thus often enabled to steer clear of the overhanging bushes.

It was an evening for the muskrats to be abroad, and we saw one, which dove as he was swimming rapidly, turning over like a wheel.

END OF VOLUME V

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